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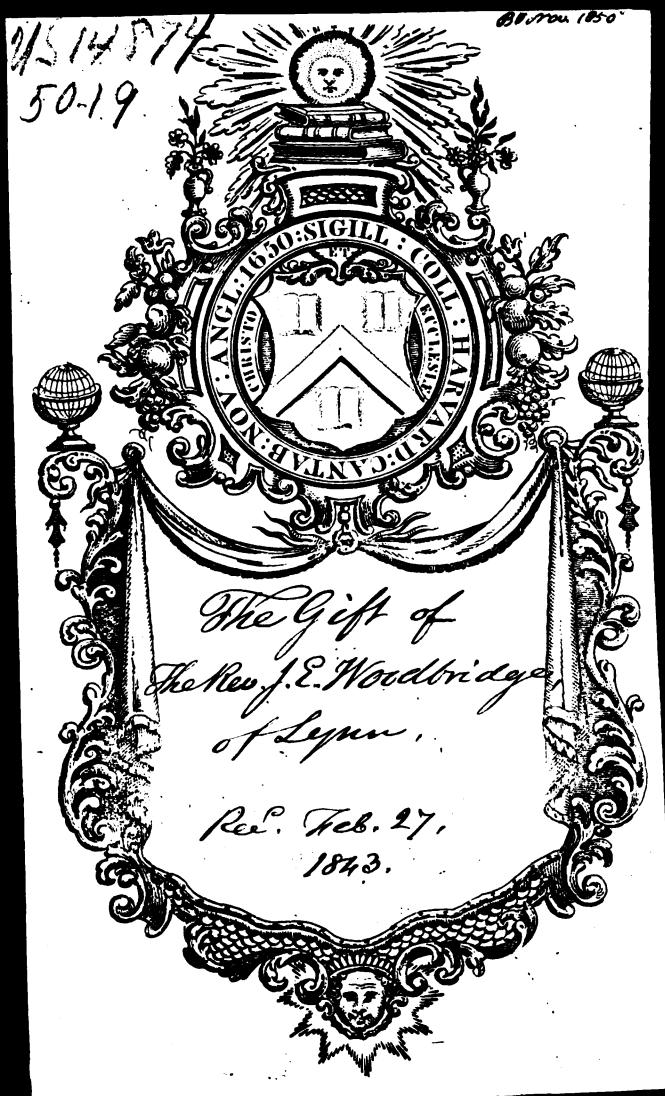
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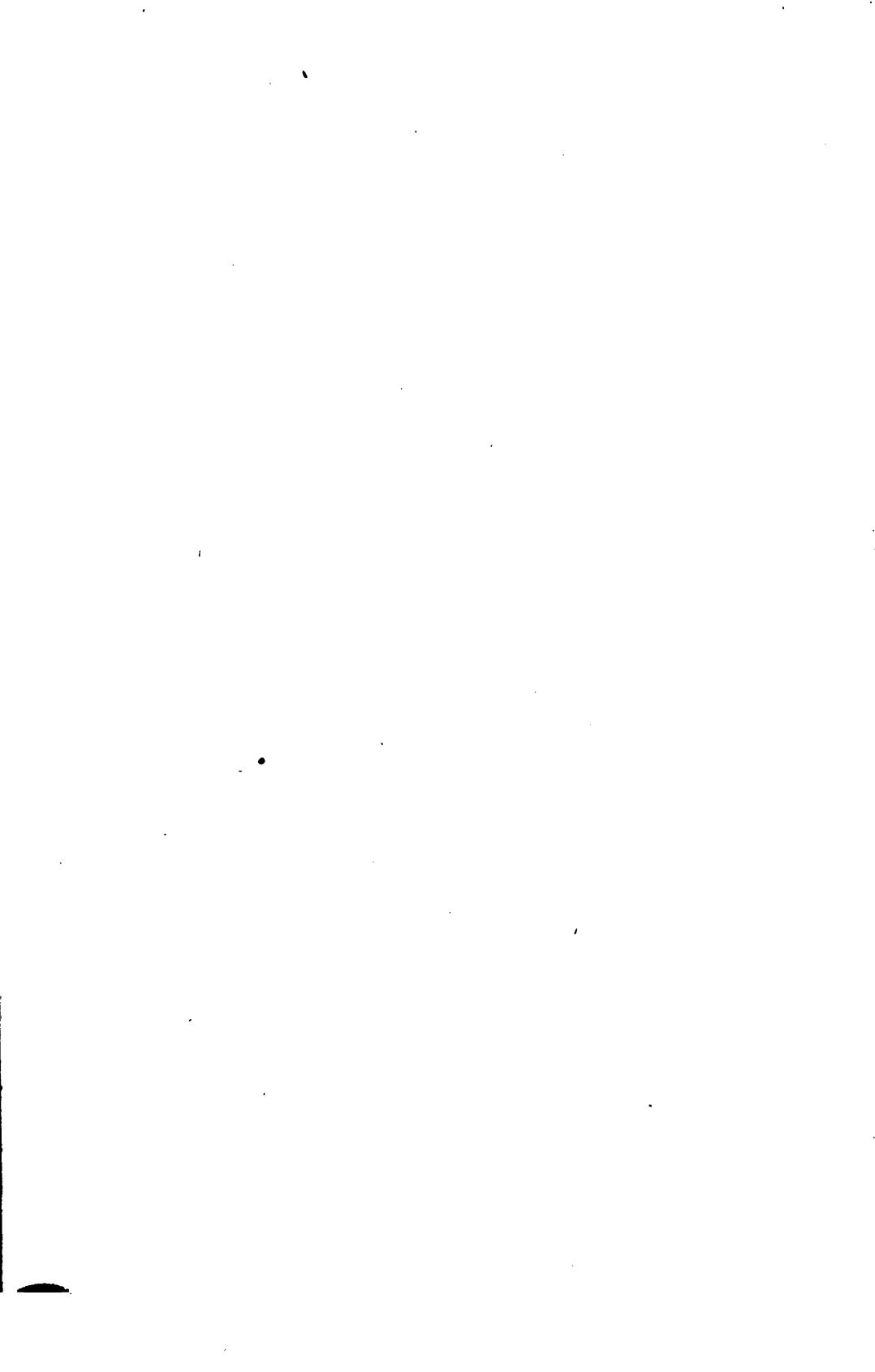
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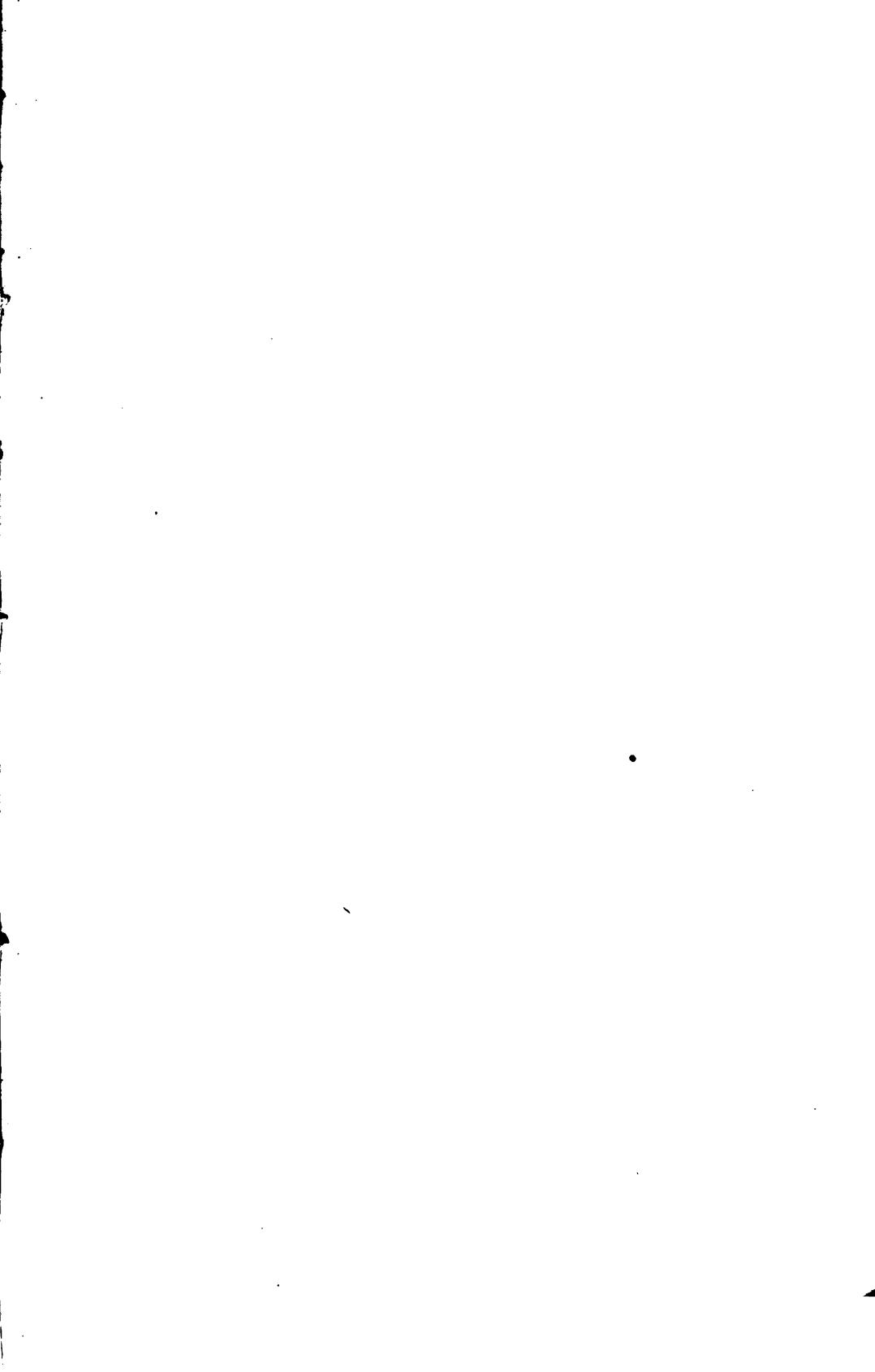
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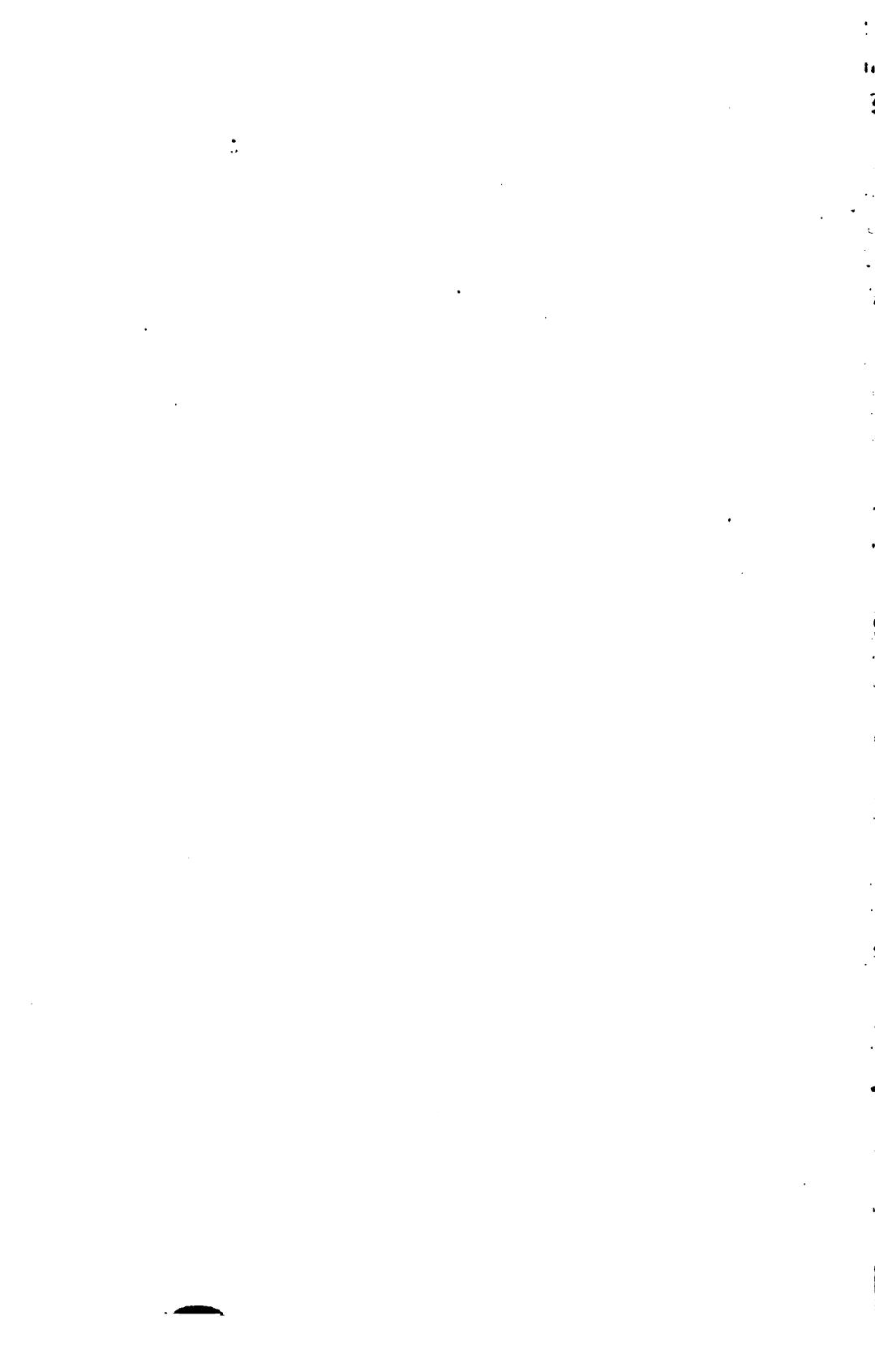
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THE

H I S T O R Y

OF THE

NORTH CHURCH IN NEW HAVEN,

FROM ITS FORMATION IN MAY, 1742, DURING THE GREAT  
AWAKENING, TO THE COMPLETION OF THE  
CENTURY IN MAY, 1842.

IN THREE SERMONS.

BY

SAMUEL W. S. DUTTON,  
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

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NEW HAVEN:  
A. H. MALTBY, GLEBE BUILDING.

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1842.

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NEW HAVEN:  
PRINTED BY E. L. HAMLEN.

At a meeting of the Church of the United Society, in New Haven,  
June 26, 1842—

*Resolved*, That Deacon Nathan Beers, Deacon Charles Bostwick, Deacon William S. Jarman, Hon. David Daggett, Hon. Simeon Baldwin, and Titus Street, Esq., be and hereby are appointed a Committee to express the thanks of this Church to Rev. S. W. S. Dutton, its pastor, for his valuable discourses on its history, and to request a copy, that they may be printed.

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*Reverend and Dear Sir—*

We, the Committee above named, with great pleasure communicate to you the above vote of the Church of the United Society, and in their name thank you for your three discourses, containing the interesting history of the Church from its origin to the close of a century, and request a copy thereof for publication.

Accept, dear sir, the assurances of our great respect and esteem.

NATHAN BEERS,  
CHARLES BOSTWICK,  
WILLIAM S. JARMAN,  
DAVID DAGGETT,  
SIMEON BALDWIN,  
TITUS STREET,

*Committee.*

Rev. S. W. S. DUTTON.

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*Dear Brethren—*

I am grateful that my feeble efforts to illustrate the origin and history of our Church have been so favorably received. I send you a copy of the discourses, according to your request. They contain facts, brought to light, many of them, at some expense of time and labor, a record of which should be made before the knowledge of them is lost. An imperfect record is better than none. I have added much information in the notes, which for obvious reasons I preferred to introduce in that form rather than in the body of the discourses. The authors from

whom I have derived information, are generally referred to in the notes. In the investigation of matters of which no history has been written, and of many of which it was difficult to find traces in the memory of the living, I have received important assistance from various individuals, among whom I would gratefully mention Rev. LEONARD BACON, Prof. KINGSLEY, and Hon. SIMEON BALDWIN.

I send you these discourses, in the hope that they may add one to many memorials of the righteous, and the many illustrations of the care and goodness of God towards his people.

Very respectfully and affectionately yours,

S. W. S. DUTTON.

Deacon NATHAN BEERS, Deacon CHARLES BOSTWICK,  
Deacon WILLIAM S. JARMAN, Hon. DAVID DAGGETT, } Committee.  
Hon. SIMEON BALDWIN, TITUS STREET, Esq.

## S E R M O N I.

### ORIGIN AND FORMATION OF THE CHURCH.

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1 SAMUEL, xii, 7.—Now, therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord, of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers.

A HUNDRED years have passed away since the formation of this Christian church, and this is the first Sabbath in the second century of its existence.\* How it had its origin in a wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit; through what trials and difficulties a merciful God carried it forward, making it an evangelical light amid great religious declension and defection and formalism; what instrumentalities He has here employed and blessed from generation to generation to keep alive, on its sacred altar, the incense of prayer and praise, and in the hearts of its members the flame of love and faith and zeal; how He has increased this church with the increase of God, multiplying its members, and making it a mother of churches; in short, His gracious acts toward you and your fathers, it is my duty and privilege to declare, and your duty and privilege to hear.

When men write the biography of an *individual*, they usually give some account of his parents and ancestry.

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\* The church was organized on the 7th of May, 1742, (old style.) Adding eleven days for the difference in style, the centennial anniversary is the 18th of May, 1842.

In giving a history of this *church*, I should deem it necessary to give some account of its parent, the first church in New Haven, and of the character of those who laid, and of those who for a century built upon, the foundations of this community, were it not that I find that labor done to my hand, in the full, accurate, and eloquent historical discourses of the present pastor of that church, which were delivered four years since, after the two hundredth anniversary of the formation of that church, and for which he deserves the gratitude of every son of the New England, and especially of the New Haven, Puritans.

For a century that church, which is coeval with the colony, though in common with most of the churches in New England, it had gradually declined in spiritual prosperity, had yet enjoyed internal peace under the ministrations of its three first pastors, Rev. John Davenport, Rev. Nicholas Street, and Rev. James Pierpont, and during the first twenty years of the ministry of Rev. Joseph Noyes. At the close of that period a difficulty arose, which resulted in the formation of this church, and some years after, of this society. Its first public manifestation, so far as the records show, was in December 28th, 1741, when the following memorial was presented at the society's meeting, signed by thirty eight men.

“To the First Society in the town of New Haven:— Whereas we, the subscribers, have, by long and sorrowful experience, found, that the preaching and conduct of the Rev. Mr. Noyes has been in great measure unprofitable to us, and that we have also reason to think that he differs from us in some points of faith, we desire, (not as we hope out of any prejudice to the persons of Mr. Noyes and our brethren and friends of the society, to whom we heartily wish all good,) that they would allow

us, and others that may incline to join with us, to draw off from them in charity, wishing to be a distinct society, that we may put ourselves under the best advantage to worship God, under such means, as he in his good providence may allow and we hope will bless, for our spiritual good and edification."\*

In order rightly to understand and appreciate the character of this transaction, and of those which followed it on one side and the other till this church was formed, and in short, the distinctive character of this church and its founders, we must briefly consider the condition and character of the churches and ministry, and some of the peculiar events, of that period.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, from 1700 to 1735, we find, that religion in New England was in a very low condition. It had degenerated into lifeless formalism, like a tree whose bark and external form are complete, but whose heart and strength have decayed. The distinction between those who served God and those who served him not, was passing, and had in a great measure passed, away. There were multitudes in the churches, who professed to be, not converted or possessed of experimental religion, but only speculative be-

\* Records of the First Society. This memorial was signed by Gideon Andrews, Caleb Tuttle, Joseph Mix, Caleb Bradley, Joseph Burroughs, David Austin, Jacob Turner, Caleb Andrews, Enos Tuttle, Obadiah Munson, Stephen Johnson, Samuel Cook, Timothy Mix, Samuel Horton, Thomas Punderson, Junr., Joseph Sackett, Hez. Beecher, Jos. Mix, Junr., Enos Thompson, John Bull, Caleb Hotchkiss, Junr., Benjamin Woodin, Caleb Bull, Timothy Jones, Benjamin Wilmott, Daniel Turner, Stephen Austin, Thomas Wilmott, Abraham Thompson, Mercy Alling, David Punderson, Enos Alling, Jabez Sherman, Amos Tuttle, Thomas Leek, Ezekiel Sanford, Timothy Alling, Amos Peck.

lievers, or at most to be taking steps preliminary to conversion. The ministry also, though it contained many, who, both in secret and public places, bewailed the prevalent and growing declension, and earnestly longed and prayed for a refreshing and reformation from the presence of the Lord, yet, by general acknowledgment, included in its ranks some unconverted men, as will always be the fact when religion has for any length of time the form without the power.\* It included also a much greater number, whose preaching, instead of being evangelical in sentiment, and plain and pungent in style and manner, was either obscure, or non-committal, or silent, or erroneous upon the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, especially upon the doctrines of human depravity and regeneration by the Spirit of God—preaching, which, instead of unfolding and enforcing the nature and necessity, for all men, of conversion, or a radical change in moral character, and addressing all unconverted men as guilty and inexcusable enemies of God, exposed every moment to eternal death, and bound at once to repent and believe in Christ, discoursed chiefly upon topics of a lifeless morality, and conveyed the impression, that men

\* “The door having been, professedly as well as really, opened for persons without piety to enter the church; as a very natural consequence, there soon ceased to be any let or hindrance to their entering the ministry. And there is painful evidence that, previous to 1740, many of this description did enter the ministry. ‘They were grave men, in *speculation* evangelical, or *moderately* so; and performed their customary ministerial duties with regularity: but their preaching lacked point, and earnestness, and application; their devotional services were without warmth and unction; their labors were not blessed of the Holy Spirit; their people slumbered; the tone of religious feeling and sentiment was sinking; and true godliness seemed fast retiring from the land.’” Wisner’s Hist. Old South Church.

who were regular in external conduct, and in attendance upon public worship, were doing on the whole very well—about all that could be expected, or that they were able to perform. As a natural consequence church discipline was neglected, and loose and immoral practices were fast pervading the community and invading the church.\*

This great and general declension from the soundness of faith, the eminence of piety, and the strict and universal morality of the Puritan founders of these New England communities, was not sudden, but the gradual and sure result of causes, the chief of which was in operation from the first.

The venerated men who settled New England, made a great advance upon the civil and religious liberty of their native land, and planted the germs of that entire separation between church and state, in which we now rejoice. Instead of having *one consolidated church*, governed by a priesthood appointed by the civil government or by patrons, having all its matters of doctrine and discipline determined and established ultimately by the civil power, and having no redress when oppressed or invaded by corruption, they established *many churches*, independent of each other, electing their own pastors, and governing themselves in matters of doctrine and discipline according to rules determined by representatives of their own choice. That they went *so far* in sundering church and state, in an age when an entire separation of church and state had never existed, is matter of wonder and

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\* Abundant proof of these statements respecting the low state of religion in the country, may be found in Prince's Christian History, Vol. I, 94, and II, 375; Trumbull's Hist. of Conn., Vol. I, p. 298, and II, p. 135; Wisner's History of Old South Church in Boston, pp. 40, 41, 42; Tracy's Great Awakening, pp. 4—9.

gratitude. They should be admired for going so far towards liberty, rather than blamed for going no farther. Still, it had been fortunate for their country, had they gone farther. They established a union—a union far less compact and oppressive than existed and now exists in England, but still a *real* union—between church and state. Congregationalism was established by law. All the people were taxed for its support, and in Massachusetts, and in the colony of New Haven, no man could have any share in the administration of the civil government or give his vote in any election, unless he was a member of one of the churches.\* This latter provision was most disastrous in its effect upon the purity and power of religion. It made the churches virtually the state, and as the natural result, in the course of a little more than half a century, formalism and worldliness in a great degree congealed the piety and corrupted the

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\* In 1631, at the second General Court held after the commencement of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, an order was made, "that for the time to come, none should be admitted to the freedom of the body politic, but such as were church members." "This most extraordinary law," says Hutchinson in his History, "was in fact continued in force until the dissolution of the charter government, (which was in 1785,) though it was repealed in appearance after the restoration of king Charles the second." See Wisner's History of the Old South Church in Boston, p. 4. In the colony of New Haven, in June, 1639, this regulation was adopted, "that church members only shall be free burgesses, and that they only shall choose magistrates and officers among themselves, to have power of transacting all the public civil affairs of the plantation; of making and repealing laws, dividing inheritances, deciding differences that may arise, and "doing all things and businesses of like nature." See Kingsley's Historical Discourse, p. 25. This regulation continued in force till 1665, when the colony of New Haven was united with the colony of Connecticut: in which latter colony this regulation never existed.

purity of those churches. At the first settlement of the country the gospel rule, of admitting to the churches those only who give evidence of a change of heart, universally prevailed. All those therefore who gave no such evidence were, according to the law, excluded from civil offices, and from the exercise of the elective franchise. These, who at first were few,\* as one generation passed away and another came on, rapidly increased and grew very uneasy, desiring the civil privileges and honors of church-members, and soon there was a strong party who claimed, that all persons baptized in infancy, whether regenerate or not, should be treated as members of the church, (except that they should not be admitted to the Lord's table,) and should be permitted, on owning the covenant, as it was called,† to offer their children for baptism and thus introduce *them* into the privileges of church-members. Some were for receiving all persons of a regular life to full communion in the churches, on their making a profession of religion, *without any inquiry*.

\* The number of those, at the first, who were not members of the church, was greater than has been generally supposed. Hutchinson gives evidence, that there were in Massachusetts, "many from the beginning." According to his account, in 1646, sixteen years after the commencement of the Massachusetts colony, the number of those not connected with the churches in Plymouth and Massachusetts was so great, that they petitioned the General Courts of both colonies, and prepared petitions to the British Parliament, praying, as they say, in behalf of "*thousands*," that the disabilities under which they labored might be removed. See Hutch. I, 145—149, and 451.

† That is, on professing their belief in an evangelical creed, and solemnly promising a *formal* observance of religious duties. It was generally understood, that this covenanting was *merely formal*. They who could covenant *heartily* were admitted to the Lord's supper, or to "full communion" as it was termed.

*as to a change of heart*, and some were for going still farther, and insisted that all who had been members of churches in England, or had been members of regular ecclesiastical parishes there, and supported the public worship, should be allowed to enjoy the privileges of members in full communion, in the churches here.\* On this subject parties began to be formed, and ran high; and in June, 1657, about twenty years from the first settlement of the country, a general council, composed of delegates from the churches of Massachusetts and Connecticut, convened by the General Courts of those colonies, decided, that all baptized persons ought to be considered members of the church, under its discipline, and entitled to all its privileges, except a participation in the Lord's supper. In 1662, the General Court of Massachusetts appointed a synod of all the ministers of that colony, which, with many dissenting voices, confirmed the decision of the council. The rule, thus recommended, though strenuously opposed,† came ere long

\* See Trumbull, I, 297, 298, 299.

† "This wide and pernicious departure from the primitive gospel discipline of the New England churches," was vigorously opposed by some of their ablest ministers. "The Rev. Charles Chauncey, President of Harvard College, Mr. Increase Mather of Boston, Mr. Mather of Northampton, and others, were warmly in the opposition." President Chauncey and Mr. Increase Mather, published against the decision of the synod, and so did the Rev. John Davenport, then minister of New Haven, whom the author of the *Magnalia* styles "the greatest of the anti-synodists." Mr. Increase Mather afterwards changed his opinion, and published two treatises in favor of the result of the synod. Mr. Davenport, partly on account of his opposition to this innovation, was called, though upwards of seventy years of age, to be pastor of the First Church in Boston. His election and installation was deemed a triumph of the anti-synodists in that church, and resulted in a seces-

into general practice, and obtained the appropriate name of the Half-way covenant.

Not many years after, the custom of receiving unregenerate persons to the *Lord's supper* began, and, after the able and excellent Stoddard of Northampton publicly and widely advocated it on the ground that the Lord's supper is a converting ordinance, increased rapidly, till it became quite extensive, though never, I believe, as extensive as the half-way covenant practice.\* Thus it

sion of twenty eight brethren, who with others were formed into the church which is now called the Old South. See Wisner's History of Old South Church, p. 6; and Bacon's Historical Discourses, p. 140.

\* The practice of admitting unconverted persons to the communion, though not *publicly* advocated till 1707, was quite extensive for many years previous. Wisner, in his History of the Old South Church, thus speaks of its prevalence and effects : "The practical result, every one sees would be, that, if the innovation already made (i. e. the half-way covenant) were not abandoned, another would speedily be introduced. And such was the fact. Correct moral deportment, with a profession of correct doctrinal opinions, and a desire for regeneration, came to be regarded as the only qualification for admission to the communion. This innovation, though not as yet publicly advocated by any, there is conclusive proof, had become quite extensive in practice previously to 1679. The proof is the fact, that one of the measures earnestly recommended by the "Reforming Synod" in 1679, was a return to the ancient strictness in admitting persons to the Lord's supper. Thus was abandoned, by the New England churches extensively, that principle, viz. 'that particular churches ought to consist of regenerate persons,'—the letting go of which soon after the apostolic age, a distinguished writer (John Owen) has affirmed and proved 'was the occasion and means of introducing all that corruption in doctrine, worship, order and rule, which ensued, and ended in the great apostasy.' And in this instance, the same effects soon began to appear. The churches soon came to consist, very considerably, in many places, of unregenerate persons—of those who regarded themselves and were regarded by others, as unregenerate. The standard of religious profession was

was, that the formalism, and worldliness, and corruption in doctrine to which I have adverted, took possession of the church, and permitted corruption in morals and practice to invade the community. It was because a *union of church and state made it necessary for worldly men, in order to obtain civil liberty, to break into the hallowed enclosure of the church of God.* Thus disastrous to religious and social welfare, must ever be a union of ecclesiastical and civil power. It casts religion under the feet of popular freedom in her onward and irresistible march. It corrupts and enslaves the church; and by formalism and laxity and defection, makes "the light of the world" almost as dark as the world itself.\*

greatly lowered; and of course vital religion itself came to be continually less and less regarded; the close and pungent preaching of the first ministers would not be endured, and it gradually ceased; and the sanctifying and converting energy of the Holy Spirit was withdrawn."

\* The union between church and state existed more extensively, and continued longer, and has therefore proved more disastrous in its results in Massachusetts than in Connecticut. Says Dr. Wisner, in the History of the Old South Church, p. 71:—"Let us be careful, however, to secure, and diffuse, and transmit to posterity the instructive lesson furnished by the result of their experiment. It was an experiment of the influence of a union between church and state, made in circumstances the most favorable for the church that have ever yet existed. The churches of Massachusetts were all originally uncorrupt and scriptural in doctrine and discipline, and composed of eminently pious men, who lived, and were ready to sacrifice every thing, for the kingdom of Christ, and whose wisdom has been the admiration of the candid of all succeeding generations. These wise and holy men established all our early civil and ecclesiastical institutions, with the express design of making every thing contribute to the preservation and purity and extended influence of the churches. And now, in less than two hundred years, what is the result? Not only has a flood of error come in, and desolated the portion of their heritage which our pious fathers cultivated with the greatest care, and made the college which

Another cause of the religious and moral declension of those times, too important to be passed over in silence, and too important also to be noticed so briefly as the limits of the occasion render necessary, was, a *kind of theology*, which for many years had more and more prevailed—a theology, which denies man's natural ability to obey God's command to repent and believe in Christ, and consistently with that denial, hesitates to urge upon him immediate reconciliation to God as a practicable duty; virtually tells him, that he is not to blame for being *impenitent*; and directs him to read the Bible, pray, attend the sanctuary, in fine, do what was then called “using the means of grace,” and be orderly and moral in outward conduct, as all he can do, or be expected to do.

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they devoutly consecrated ‘to Christ and his church,’ the principal instrument of maintaining and diffusing that error, but the churches themselves have been declared, by judicial decisions having all the force of law, to have no legal rights or existence independent of the civil corporations—the towns or parishes with which they are connected.” “The only circumstance,” say these decisions, “which gives a church any legal character, *is its connexion with some regularly constituted society.*” “A church *cannot subsist* without some religious community to which it is attached.” “As to all civil purposes, the secession of a whole church from a parish would be an extinction of the church; and it is competent to *the members of the parish* to institute a new church, or to engraft one upon the old stock, if any of it should remain; and this *new church would succeed to all the rights of the old* in relation to the parish. Mass. Term Reports, XVI, 504. Such is the result of a union between church and state, in circumstances the most favorable for the church that have ever yet existed! When will the professed followers of Christ learn the full import of that declaration, ‘My kingdom is not of this world.’ When will the churches of Christ learn to rely *only* on themselves and their king? Then, and not till then, will he accomplish for them all that he hath promised.”

This sort of theology laid a consistent foundation for the half-way covenant system. For it was plain, that men ought not to be deprived of *civil privileges* for want of repentance and faith, when repentance and faith *were beyond their power*. It led also to the conclusion that the Lord's supper was one of the "means of grace" which they were "to use" in order to receive conversion. On the other hand, the half-way covenant system, and its kindred practice of admitting unregenerate persons to the Lord's supper, reacted upon and extended this sort of theology, filling the church with unconverted members, who liked the opiates to conscience of such a theology, and introducing, as there is reason to believe, some unconverted men into the ministry. It was disastrous to religion *indirectly*, by leading to the practices of admitting unregenerate persons to partial, and full, standing in the church, and *directly*, by leading men to think that they were guiltless—to feel at ease—while living out of Christ and in rebellion against God.

Another cause of the decline of piety, which I will barely mention, was the frequent warfare of the colonists with the Indians, and the necessity of constant and anxious vigilance, in order to keep their dearly bought privileges from the grasp of the rapacious ministers of English tyranny. Such excitement and agitation are unfavorable to religious prosperity.

It was in a period of such laxity of religious opinion and of ecclesiastical order and discipline, and consequent declension in spirituality and morals, that the Rev. Mr. Noyes, the fourth pastor of the ancient church in New Haven, had been educated, and had formed his style of doctrine and preaching and measures. There is no reason, that I can find, to question—what some of his warmest

opposers denied—his piety. There is also no reason to doubt, that his preaching, both as to doctrine and style and manner, was such as does not tend, in any high degree, to the conviction and conversion of sinners, or the edification and spirituality of Christians. Dr. Trumbull, a historian of undoubted credit, whose sympathies however, it should be remarked, were with those who opposed Mr. Noyes, says of him, “though he had the gift of prayer, and was edifying in that part of worship, yet he was unanimating and unpopular in his preaching. His zealous and Calvinistic hearers did not consider him, as so faithfully and plainly preaching the doctrines of human depravity, of regeneration by the supernatural influences of the divine Spirit, and of its absolute necessity that men might be saved, of effectual calling and justification by faith only, as a minister of the gospel ought by all means to do. They did not conceive him, as making proper distinctions between true and false religion, and preaching in such a manner, as had a tendency to show to hypocrites and secure sinners their danger and misery. From the manner of his preaching, especially on sacramental occasions, suspicions arose that he did not hold the real divinity of the Savior.”\* President Clap accused him of being an Arminian.† Mr. Bacon says of his preaching, “that it was dry in style, dull in delivery, and at the best non-committal in respect to those ever litigated doctrines, which are the grand objective motives of Christian piety.”‡ The truth, so far as we can

\* Trumbull, II, p. 340. † Bacon’s Historical Discourses, p. 233.

‡ Bacon’s Hist. Disc., p. 229. “The preaching of the pastor, the Rev. Joseph Noyes, was far from being of a popular character; and besides it was thought to be of doubtful orthodoxy.” See sketch of the History of Yale College, in the American Quarterly Register, by Prof. Kingsley.

now ascertain it, is, that he was dull and dry in style and manner; that, while he professed a Calvinistic creed, he was very sparing in doctrinal discussion, and when he entered upon it, left his hearers in doubt and suspicion as to his real belief; that he was infected with the errors of that age respecting conversion, exhorting his hearers, not immediately to repent—which he believed they could not do—but to outward order and good works and diligent use of the means of grace, in which course of action they might *gradually* experience a change of heart; addressing his hearers, not as for God or against him, and applying the searching tests of character to assist them to decide on which side they stood, but in a manner which led them to suppose, that they were in a promising condition, so long as they were regular in outward duties and religious forms; in fine, a preacher who would not greatly disturb the ease and security of lukewarm Christians or impenitent sinners.

As we look back to the state of that church, and of the churches throughout New England, at that period, it is manifest to us, that nothing would have saved the churches and ministry from sinking into apostacy, except that wonderful visitation of the reviving Spirit of God, which makes the middle of the last century memorable in the annals of this country, and of the Christian church—the revival of 1740, which has generally been styled “the Great Awakening.”

As this revival, in connexion with the character of Mr. Noyes’ ministry, was the cause of the origin of this church, it would be appropriate for me to enter somewhat at length into its nature and history. But the theme is a great one. The limits of these discourses will permit me to speak of

it only so far, as is necessary to elucidate the origin and distinctive character of this church.\*

In the year 1735, there was a general revival of religion in Northampton, of which Mr., afterwards President Edwards, who was then the minister of that place, has given an account in his "Narrative of Surprising Conversations." He says, "There had been, for two or three years, an increasing sobriety and seriousness on the part of the young in that place, but about the commencement of that year, a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion and the eternal world, became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees and all ages. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvellous light."† This "refreshing from the presence of the Lord" was not confined to Northampton, but was manifest in its blessed effects in many towns in Massachusetts and New Jersey, and in still more in Connecticut. Mr. Edwards mentions a revival in New Haven that year, of which he had received an account by letter from Mr. Noyes.‡ From 1735 to 1740, there was a declension in religion; but the good fruits of the revival were very manifest. In the year 1740, the Rev. George Whitefield, with whose fame my hearers are familiar, came to this country the second time, having two years before visited the colony of Georgia. He preached in Philadelphia, New York, and in many places in New Jersey, to the great admiration of listening thousands, and soon passed on to the southern colonies, where he preached for

\* I would refer my readers to the History of the Great Awakening, by Rev. Joseph Tracy—a very able and interesting work.

† Edwards' Works, Lond. ed., p. 348. ‡ Edwards' Works, p. 349.

several months, amid much excitement, and much opposition from his own denomination, and with great success in the conversion of souls. Having been invited by several eminent ministers and laymen to New England, where a general revival had already commenced, he sailed from Charleston, and arrived in New England on the Sabbath, September 14th. He found the people of New England anxiously awaiting his arrival, and ready to be moved by him. He preached in Newport, where he landed, and in Bristol, and passed on to Boston. He was there received with great attention, and his preaching was to great numbers, and with great immediate effect, and followed by a general revival in that city, hitherto unaffected in the recent awakening. Having remained in Boston over three weeks, he went on to Northampton, to visit Mr. Edwards, and the scene of the revival of 1735, and thence to New Haven, tarrying a while and preaching with great effect in various towns on the way. He arrived at this place on the 23d of October, having preached that day to thousands at Middletown and Wallingford. Here he was entertained at the house of Mr. James Pierpont, who was afterwards a leader in the formation of this church. As the legislature of the colony was in session, he remained till Sabbath evening, preaching once on Friday afternoon, twice on Saturday, and twice on the Sabbath, besides expounding at his lodgings and conversing with individuals, and had the pleasure of seeing numbers daily impressed. Several ministers waited on him, with whose pious conversation he was much refreshed. Among these was the Rev. Jedediah Mills of Ripton, "a dear man of God," says Whitefield, "who talked like one who was no novice in divine things." In one of his sermons, "he spoke very closely to the students of the dreadful ill consequences of an unconverted

ministry. Mills and some other ministers rejoiced in spirit." This Mr. Mills was one, as we shall see hereafter, who favored this church, and of the select council which installed its first pastor. Probably this visit was the commencement of the revival in this place. While he was here, persons were daily impressed; and four months afterwards, we hear of a "great and general awakening" in the College, which probably was in connection with a revival in the town.\* Trumbull says that Connecticut was more remarkably the seat of the work, than any part of New England or of the American colonies, and that in the years 1740-1-2, it had pervaded, in a greater or less degree, every part of the colony. He mentions several "reverend gentlemen who most favored the work, while others opposed it." But "the most zealous" of which "were the Rev. Messrs. Jedediah Mills, Benjamin Pomeroy, Eleazar Wheelock and Joseph Bellamy;" all of whom, it is to be remarked by us, were the advisers of this church, preached to it, and were of the council which installed its first pastor.

The preaching of Whitefield and these men, insisted chiefly on those great doctrines, on which Mr. Noyes was either non-committal or pointless or erroneous: especially the doctrines of human depravity; of the necessity of regeneration by the Spirit of God, in order to be in heart or works acceptable to God; of the obligations of sinners to repent at once, pressing into the kingdom of God; and their abominable character and conduct in the sight of God, and their dreadful danger, while impenitent. The difference between their doctrines and preaching and Mr. Noyes', must have been seen and painfully felt by those who were zealous in religion. It is no wonder, that

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\* The materials for this sketch of Whitefield's visit, I find in Tracy's "Great Awakening," and in Trumbull—principally in the former.

Christians in a revival, who had heard Whitefield and those whom I have mentioned, some of whom were better preachers, in some respects, than Whitefield,\* with their hearts full of desire for the conversion of sinners, should have considered preaching so poorly adapted to that end as Mr. Noyes' "unprofitable," and wished and determined to seek for themselves, that of a different character.

It is probable, also, that Mr. Noyes manifested some of that opposition to the revival and to its zealous promoters, which he exhibited very strongly two years afterwards, when he joined with the ministers of the New Haven Association in thanking the legislature for their persecuting laws against the friends of the revival, and still later, in voting to exclude Whitefield from the pulpits of Connecticut, as he did from his own pulpit.† There can be no doubt, that from the time of Whitefield's first visit to this place, if not long before, there was a dissatisfaction with Mr. Noyes, which only needed a favorable opportunity to manifest itself. Such an opportunity soon occurred.

In September, 1741, about a year after Whitefield's visit, there came to this place Rev. James Davenport. He was one of the imitators of Whitefield, and like all imitators, especially of such men, more successful in copying his faults than his excellencies. Previous to 1740, he had been esteemed a pious, sound, and faithful minister. But

\* Their preaching was better than Whitefield's for the purposes of *instruction*—in clear, discriminating and correct views of divine truth; but far inferior for the purposes of *popular impression*—in fervor of feeling and in attractive and powerful oratory: in which probably, he has never been surpassed.

† Indeed, Trumbull says, in accounting for the separation, that Mr. Noyes "appeared wholly unfriendly to the religious awakening and concern in the country, and to the zealous and experimental preachers by whom it was promoted." Vol. II, p. 340.

being constitutionally liable to enthusiastic impulses, and affected, as it afterwards appeared, by a disease which increases excitability and exposes to insanity under exciting causes, his mind lost its balance, and he commenced an itinerating career through the churches, of extravagance and confusion. His enthusiasm, and that kind of eloquence which usually accompanies enthusiasm, his reputation for piety, and his great apparent consecration to and communion with God, gave him great power over excitable and zealous minds. "He gave," says Trumbull, "an unrestrained liberty to noise and outcry, both of distress and joy, in time of divine service. He promoted both with all his might, raising his voice to the highest pitch, together with the most violent agitations of body. With his unnatural and violent agitations of body, he united a strange singing tone, which mightily tended to raise the feelings of weak and undiscerning people, and consequently to heighten the confusion among the passionate of his hearers. It was his manner, when a number had cried out, and there had been great agitations of body, to pronounce them tokens of divine favor, and what was still worse, he would declare those who were the subjects of those outcries and agitations, to be converted, or that they had come to Christ. He was further the great encourager, if not the first setter up, of public exhorters, not restricting them according to the gospel rule of brotherly exhortation, but encouraging any who were reputed to be lively, zealous Christians, to exhort publicly, in full assemblies, and with ministerial assurance and authority, though altogether raw and unskillful in the word of righteousness."\* In July, 1741, he left his pastoral charge in Southold, Long Island, and came to Stonington, where he preached with

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\* Vol. II, p. 160.

great success, one hundred being awakened, as was thought, under his first sermon. He passed through many towns in the eastern and southern part of Connecticut, preaching with great effect and confusion, and freely examining his brethren in the ministry, and publicly condemning those who did not manifest, in his view, right doctrinal opinions and sufficient zeal in the revival, as unconverted men. He arrived at New Haven about the beginning of September. Here, on account of his descent from the venerated founder of the first church, Rev. John Davenport, and his alliance, through his mother, who was a native of New Haven, with several prominent families, and his reputation for uncommon sanctity and usefulness, he was favorably received, and for a time admitted to Mr. Noyes' pulpit. Very soon, however, displeased with Mr. Noyes' ways of thinking and acting with reference to the revival, he began to denounce him, in conversation and public prayer, as an unconverted man, a wolf in sheep's clothing, and a destroyer of souls. Mr. Noyes therefore had a meeting of his friends at his house on the Lord's day, the 21st of September, and desired Mr. Davenport to give the reasons for his abuse of him. Mr. Davenport in reply gave several reasons, which were most of them very frivolous, and none of them any proof against Mr. Noyes' piety. Neither Mr. Noyes nor Mr. Davenport were satisfied, and Mr. Davenport beginning to pray for Mr. Noyes, and Mr. Noyes forbidding him, the meeting broke up in confusion.\* After this, Mr. Noyes forbade him admission to his pulpit, and we hear no more of Mr. Davenport in New Haven. From this time, doubtless, there began to be an *organized* opposition to Mr. Noyes, and parties began to be formed, and to run

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\* For an account of this meeting, see Bacon's Hist. Disc. p. 214.

high, which probably then, and certainly ere long, took the *forms*, the one of hostility and the other of friendship; to the revival, and the *names* of New and Old Lights ; Mr. Noyes and his friends on the one side, and his opposers and their adherents on the other.

At the next society's meeting, which was on the 28th of December, about three months after Mr. Davenport's visit, the petition for a division of the society was presented, which I read in the beginning of this discourse.

That Mr. Davenport was not the *cause* of this division, but that it lay farther back in dissatisfaction with the unprofitable character of Mr. Noyes' ministry—a dissatisfaction excited perhaps, certainly strengthened, by the evangelical and awakening preaching, and the stirring scenes, of the revival, is very evident from the preceding narrative. That a man, whose course was such as that of Davenport, should have been the occasion, or afforded the opportunity, of organizing that dissatisfaction, was unfortunate for the founders of this church. They were called for a time "Mr. Davenport's party," and some of his ill reputation, perhaps even now in some minds, adheres to them. We should however consider, that, till within two or three months before Mr. Davenport came to New Haven, he had been known only as an able and judicious and highly useful minister ; that Whitefield, whom he had seen, greatly admired, and now imitated, had himself freely denounced ministers who did not come up to what he deemed the right standard of doctrine and zeal and measures, as unconverted men, made the dreadful consequences of "an unconverted ministry" a frequent theme of public discourse, and was known to give heed to religious impulses, and to value highly "outcries and bodily agitations ;" and that Davenport

came hither with the highest recommendations from those whom zealous Christians honored as the most able promoters of the revival. "Whitefield had publicly eulogized him," says one of Davenport's apologists,\* "and had declared in conversation, that he never knew one keep so close a walk with God as Mr. Davenport. Mr. Tennent (one of the revered names of that memorable period) affirmed Mr. Davenport to be one of the most heavenly men he was ever acquainted with. Mr. Pomeroy, who is well acquainted with both, thinks he doth not come one whit behind Mr. Whitefield, but rather goes beyond him for heavenly communion and fellowship with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ. Mr. Parsons of Lyme, and Mr. Owen of Groton, (worthies of that day,) very highly commend him for holiness. In brief, there is not one minister in all Connecticut, that is zealously affected in the good cause of God at this day, but instead of slighting him is apt to think more highly of him than we ought to think of men, and to receive him almost as if he was an angel from heaven."—"This," says another,† "is the statement of an honest partizan, so far as a partizan can be honest; not false, but too highly colored. Davenport had undoubtedly produced wonderful effects, and collected a large tribute of veneration." We should remember also that many ministers, at that day, who were esteemed very judicious friends of the revival, approved and rejoiced in "outcries and bodily agitations." Jonathan Edwards, than whose authority none was then, or is now greater, said, "when I see them (outcries and

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\* Rev. Andrew Croswell of Boston, in a pamphlet published July 16th, 1742.

† Tracy's Great Awakening, from which, with some abbreviation, I quote the above testimony.

bodily agitations) excited by preaching the important truths of God's word, I do not scruple to speak of them, and rejoice in them, and to bless God for them, as probable tokens of God's presence and the success of preaching. I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it when those things are held forth to them, which are worthy of their being greatly affected by, I rejoice in it more than in an appearance of solemn attention, and a show of affection by weeping; and that, because when there have been those outcries I have found from time to time a greater and much more excellent effect. To rejoice that the work of God is carried on calmly, is in effect to rejoice that it is carried on with less power, or that there is not so much of the influence of God's Spirit."\* Considering these things, we shall not wonder that the early founders of this church were influenced by Davenport, or deem them deserving of severe censure, especially, as it appears, that they did not approve of his extreme measures. The writer† who is chiefly relied on for the account of his conduct in New Haven, and who certainly had strong prejudices against the friends of the revival, says, "that few or none of his greatest admirers undertake peremptorily to justify these things; but they have conceived such an extraordinary opinion of his holiness and success, as that they seem to suppose, that he has some extraordinary assistance, or commission to do that which may not be done by any other man."

I have now endeavored with fairness, to set before you the means of judging of the motives and conduct

\* Thoughts on the Revival, p. 394. Lond. edition.

† Dr. Chauncy of Boston.

of the thirty eight men, who petitioned the society, in very respectful and proper language, for permission to draw off and form a distinct society by themselves. Respecting this petition, the present pastor of the First Church well remarks: "To us at this day, it seems perfectly obvious, that the only wise or reasonable course in regard to such a memorial, and indeed the only course consistent with the principles of religious freedom, was either to take such measures as might conciliate the petitioners, and overcome their prejudices, or if that seemed impracticable, to grant them their request at once."\* The society however acted otherwise. Their record says, "A question being proposed to the society, whether they would do any thing with respect to the above memorial, it was resolved in the negative."

The petitioners since they had, before the presentation of this memorial, had repeated conversations with Mr. Noyes on their grievances, and after much pains to obtain satisfaction, had been unable to obtain any, either in private conversation, or by his preaching in public, drew articles of charge or grievance, and presented them to Mr. Noyes, desiring that they might be communicated to the church and society, and soliciting a mutual council (i. e. a council chosen mutually by the parties) to hear and give advice in their difficulties.† Mr. Noyes told them that the church, having adopted the Saybrook Platform, belonged to the Consociation, and could have no council but the Consociation of the ministers of the county and delegates from their churches. The ministers and churches of the county were almost all opposed to the revival, and of course it was supposed that they would be inclined to favor Mr. Noyes,

\* Bacon's Hist. Disc., p. 218.

† Trumbull, II, p. 340.

rather than his opposers. For this reason, doubtless, the complainants did not wish to go to the Consociation, whose decision at that time, was considered *judicial* and *final*. For the same reason, doubtless, Mr. Noyes wished that the case should go to the Consociation. The complainants declared that the church was originally independent,\* had never adopted the Saybrook Platform, was still independent, and not subject to a *judicial* body, such as the Consociation had grown to be. The church records were referred to, and no vote of the church adopting the Saybrook Platform could be found; and this it was claimed, was decisive proof that the church was still independent. On the other hand, the well known facts, that the former pastor of the church, Mr. Pierpont, was a leading member of the synod that formed the Platform, and indeed the principal author of that instrument; and that the church was present by its pastor and delegate, in the council which had approved the Platform, and formed the Consociation for the county; and had uniformly sent delegates from year to year to the Consociation—these facts were adduced as evidence that the church was not independent,

\* A *consociated church*, is one which is connected with the Consociation, (a council composed of the pastors and messengers of the churches within certain local limits—in Connecticut within a county or half a county,) to which an appeal may be taken from its decisions, and which must be its council, whenever there is occasion for a council. Whether the decisions of the Consociation are *judicial* and *final*, or only *advisory*, is a question, respecting which, there has been difference of opinion, and which at different periods, has been differently decided. The general opinion at the present day is that its decisions are only *advisory*.

An *independent church*, is one which is not connected with a Consociation, or any standing council; but may, whenever, according to the customs of Congregational churches, it has occasion for a council, select a council without any regard to geographical limits.

but consociated. The petitioners persisted in their denial, whereupon Mr. Noyes put the question to the church, whether they were consociated, and on taking the vote, *excluded the petitioners from voting.* Of course, it was decided that the church was consociated. The complainants, then, considering their grievances greatly aggravated, and declaring that Mr. Noyes and his friends, by voting in the Saybrook Platform, had "divested them of their ancient ecclesiastical privileges," and formed themselves into another church than that with which they (the complainants) were in covenant, drew off, affirming that they were the church on the original foundation: and proceeded to take the benefit of the Act of Toleration, which allowed persons, on qualifying themselves by taking a prescribed oath before a magistrate, to organize themselves as a religious congregation, dissenting from the established worship of the colony; though it did not free them from taxation by the society from which they dissented.\* They then professed their desires to have their grievances heard

\* That Act was passed May, 1708, and is as follows:

"An Act for the ease of such as soberly dissent from the way of worship and ministry, established by the laws of this government.

"It is enacted and ordained by the Governor, Council and Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, for the ease of such as soberly dissent from the way of worship and ministry established by the ancient laws of this Government, and still continuing, that if any such persons shall at the County Court of that County they belong to, qualify themselves according to an Act made in the first year of the late King *William* and Queen *Mary*, granting liberty of worshipping God, in a way separate from that which is by law established, they shall enjoy the same liberty and privilege in any place within this colony, without any let, hindrance and molestation whatever.

"*Provided always*, that nothing herein, shall be construed to the prejudice of the rights and privileges of the churches by law established in

by a mutual council, i. e. a council mutually agreed on by the parties. But Mr. Noyes would not consent. They therefore called a council of their own, consisting of Rev. Messrs. Samuel Cooke, John Graham, Elisha Kent, and Joseph Bellamy, from the eastern district of Fairfield county.. These ministers met in New Haven on the 5th day of May, 1742, at the house of Mr. Samuel Cooke. They took into consideration the request of brethren James Pierpont, Capt. James Talmadge and Lieut. Jos. Mix,

this Government, or to the excusing any person from paying any such minister, or town dues, as are now, or shall hereafter be due from them." *Acts and Laws of his Majesty's Colony of Connecticut in New England.* New London edition, 1715, p. 134.

The Act of Parliament, to which reference is made in this colonial Act, and on which this colonial Act is founded, is thus spoken of by Blackstone: "The penalties (for dissenting from the worship of the church of England) are all of them suspended by the statute 1st of Wm. & Mary, Stat. I, Ch. 18, for exempting their Majesties' protestant subjects, dissenting from the church of England, from the penalties of certain laws," commonly called the Toleration Act ; which exempts all dissenters (except papists and such as deny the Trinity) from all penal laws relating to religion, provided they take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy (or make a similar affirmation, being Quakers) and subscribe the declaration against popery, and repair to some congregation registered in the Bishop's Court or at the Sessions, the doors whereof must be always open : and dissenting teachers are also to subscribe the thirty-nine articles, except those relating to church government and infant baptism. Thus are all persons who will approve themselves no papists or oppugners of the Trinity, left at full liberty to act as their conscience shall direct them in the matter of religious worship. But by Statute 5, Geo. I, Ch. 4, no mayor or principal magistrate, must appear at any dissenting meeting with the ensigns of his office, on pain of disability to hold that, or any other office : the legislature judging it a matter of propriety, that a mode of worship set up in opposition to the national, when allowed to be exercised in peace, should be exercised also with decency, gratitude and humility." Blackstone, Comm. Book IV, Chap. 4.

asking advice as to their ecclesiastical difficulties, and having searched the records of the church, and deliberated on the questions presented to them, drew up the result to which they arrived, in the form of resolutions;\* the amount of which is, that since Mr. Noyes and his friends had, by secluding the complainants, and voting in a conformity with the Saybrook Platform, divested the complainants of their ancient ecclesiastical liberties and privileges, and thus really formed another church, they (the council) would proceed on the next day, publicly and solemnly, not to set apart the complainants as a second church, but to *re-establish* them as the original church on the original foundation.

"Accordingly," here I quote substantially from the church records, "the next day was attended as a day of solemn fasting and prayer. Two sermons were delivered; one in the forenoon by Mr. Graham, and the other in the afternoon by Mr. Bellamy. At the same time, eighteen brethren and twenty-five sisters, forty-three in the whole,† subscribed the confession of faith and church covenant,‡ which had been used in the ancient church of New Haven, from the

\* See Chh. Records.

† Their names are as follows:—Brethren. Samuel Thompson, James Pierpont, Gideon Andrews, James Talmadge, Nathaniel Sherman, Caleb Bradley, Joseph Burroughs, Hezekiah Beecher, Stephen Johnson, Philip Rexford, Zuriel Kimberly, Joseph Mix jun., Samuel Horton, Stephen Austin, Enos Alling, David Punderson, Joseph Mix, Timothy Mix.

Sisters. Margaret Mansfield, Sarah Pierpont, Hannah Talmadge, Mary Thompson, Anna Rexford, Susannah Cook, Lydia Burroughs, Rebecca Sherman, Esther Sherman, Thankful Bradley, Phebe Andrews, Anna Mix, Damaris Mix, Ruth Mansfield, Thankful Punderson, Mary Mix, Hannah Tuttle, Anna Jones, Elizabeth Dorman, Syble Gilbert, Abigail Horton, Dorothy Tuttle, Sarah Horton, Mary English, Abigail Munson.

‡ See a copy of this confession of faith and church covenant in the Appendix.

beginning; and on their being distinctly read, publicly and expressly gave their assent and consent to them. They also publicly declared and covenanted, in the following manner, namely: Whereas, in addition to other grievances too tedious and unnecessary here to enumerate, of which we would not willingly perpetuate the memory, a considerable part of the First Church in New Haven have lately, (viz. on the 25th of January last,) under the conduct of their present pastor, voted a conformity to the Saybrook Platform, and in consequence of it, (to show more plainly the design of said vote,) at the same time, by their vote, carried to the standing Consociation of this county a complaint against sundry members of said church, thereby owning a judicial and decisive authority in the said stated Consociation, contrary to the known fundamental principle and practice of said church, time out of mind, which has always denied any judicial or decisive authority under Christ, vested in any particular persons or class, over any particular Congregational church, confederated as this; We the subscribers, members of said church, firmly adhering to the Congregational principles and privileges on which the said church was founded, and hath stood unshaken from the beginning, through successive generations, until the 25th day of January last, being by the said innovations hereunto necessitated, apprehend ourselves called of God, in company, to vindicate our ancient rightful powers and privileges, and to put ourselves into a proper capacity for the enjoyment thereof, upon the ancient footing: And for that purpose, do now, under the conduct of Divine Providence, humbly sought, by fasting and prayer, assume a church state of the gospel, on the ancient basis of that church, whereof we stood members in fact, as well as of right, until the unhappy period above mentioned, wherein

the pastor and a number of the brethren with him, went off from the ancient foundation as aforesaid.

"And we with all affection, invite others, the members of said church, who do or may see just cause of grievance at said innovations, to join with us in asserting our ancient rightful powers and privileges broken in upon.

"We solemnly declare our belief in the Christian religion, as contained in the sacred Scriptures, and with such a view thereof, as the confession of faith hath exhibited, which is hereunto annexed, fully agreeing, in substance, with the confession of faith owned by said church, time out of mind; heartily resolving to conform our lives unto the rule thereof, that holy religion, as long as we live in this world. We solemnly renew a religious dedication of ourselves to the Lord Jehovah, who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and avouch him this day to be our God, our Father, our Savior, our Leader, and receive Him as our portion forever. We give up ourselves anew to the blessed Jesus, who is the Lord Jehovah, and adhere to Him, as the head of his people in the covenant of grace, and rely on Him as our prophet, priest, and king, to bring us unto eternal blessedness. We renewedly acknowledge our everlasting and indispensable obligations to glorify our God, in all the duties of a godly, sober, and righteous life; and very particularly in the duties of a church state, as a body of people associated for an obedience to Him, in all ordinances of the gospel; and we therefore depend on His gracious assistance, for our faithful discharge of the duties thus incumbent on us. We desire and intend, and with dependence on His promised and powerful grace, we engage anew to walk together as a church of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the faith and order of the gospel, so far as we shall have the same revealed unto us, conscientiously

attending the public worship of God, the sacraments of the New Testament, the discipline of His kingdom, and all His holy institutions in common with one another, and watchfully avoiding sinful stumbling-blocks and contentions, as becometh a people, whom the Lord hath bound up together in the bundle of life. At the same time, we do also present our offspring with us unto the Lord, purposing with His help, to do our part in the methods of religious education, that they may be the Lord's. And all this we do, flying to the blood of the everlasting covenant for the pardon of our many errors, praying that the glorious Lord, who is the great Shepherd, would prepare and strengthen us for every good work, to do His will, working in us that which will be well pleasing to Him, to whom be glory, for ever and ever, Amen."

None, I think, can fail to notice the solemnity, the deep, fervent and evangelical piety, and entire consecration to God, which breathe through this covenant.

"Upon these solemn transactions, the Rev. Mr. Cooke, in his own name, and in the name of the ministers and churches composing the council, owned them as a true church of Christ, and declared his readiness, on the desire of said church, to assist them as such."

Thus my brethren was this church organized, or, as its first members claimed, re-established.

After the lapse of a hundred years we can look at this separation impartially; and thus looking, two things are to us very obvious.

1. That the ostensible cause of separation, professed in the result of the council, was not the real one, viz. that the church had voted a conformity with the Saybrook Platform. The dissatisfied party had petitioned for liberty to withdraw, and form a distinct society, on

the ground of the unprofitableness to them of Mr. Noyes' preaching and his difference from them in faith. Besides, it is quite evident, that the church was conformed to the Saybrook Platform. True, there is no record of any vote to that effect. But, considering the imperfection of the records, that fact is not proof to the contrary. On the other hand, the former pastor of the church, Mr. Pierpont, was the principal author, and warmly in favor of the Platform. The church was represented by its pastor and delegate in the council, which recommended that instrument, and formed the Consociation for this county. The church had uniformly acted as a consociated church, by sending delegates to the Consociation. These facts to an impartial mind are sufficient evidence, that the church had adopted the Saybrook Platform. In denying this, and asserting the contrary, the first founders of this church and their council were undoubtedly mistaken. From the first however there had been *two constructions* of the Platform, as to the power of the Consociation. One, the strict or Presbyterian construction, affirmed, that the Consociation (which was a standing council of ministers and delegates from the churches in a county) was a *judicial* tribunal, to which all church difficulties might be carried, and from which there was no appeal. The other, the liberal or Congregational construction, was, that the Consociation was an *advisory* body, merely, whose results were binding only by the *moral influence* of a wise and dignified body.\* The

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\* "The first Consociation of this county, convened at Branford, April, 1709, (a few months after the Saybrook agreement, at which were present some of the *compilers* of the articles of discipline,) on the request of some churches present, declared it as their sense, that the articles were no more than a *recognition* of the obligations which

former, or strict construction, had, in the time of Mr. Noyes, become established in the Consociation of New Haven county. Of this fact, that such was the construction of the power of the Consociation, the members of the church opposed to Mr. Noyes probably had not been distinctly aware; at least, they had not been distinctly aware of the *edge* of this construction. They had had no difficulties to settle, and therefore no occasion to know much about Consociation. For a long time, they had been at peace, and moreover asleep; and now when they *had* a difficulty to settle by the Consociation, they awoke, to find that their Congregational liberty had vanished in a construction, and that they were under the power of a stated council, as strict and arbitrary as a presbytery.

Still, I must have more confidence in human nature, even when renewed, than I have, did I not believe, that, if the ministers of this Consociation had been in favor of the revival, and sympathizing with the friends of the revival in this place, instead of being, as they almost all were, opposed to the revival, and therefore in sympathy, not with them, but with Mr. Noyes, they (the first founders of this church) never would have thought of denying either the conformity of the church to the Platform, or the strict construction of the Platform. Parties, and even religious parties, are apt to be in favor of a strong government *when it is on their side*, and opposed to it, when *against their side*. And those, who find arbitrary power bearing hard on themselves, are they, who

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the *gospel of Christ* brings distinct societies of Christians under, to afford each other *mutual advice and assistance* when desired. Till this explanation was made by the ministers, the delegates from the churches would not consent to receive the Platform." Dr. Dana's Century Discourse.

are the first to oppose it. This, by the way, is an instructive lesson to men, both in church and state, as to the usefulness of minorities.

If the first founders of this church had said, that a construction of the Platform had grown into power and prevalence, which made their form of government widely different from that which they supposed they were under, they would have stated the truth; and this would have been a valid ground of *complaint*, though not perhaps of *separation*. But to put the cause of their separation, as they did, on the ground that the church had voted in a mode of government to which it had never conformed, was to place their cause on ground which was not accordant with fact, and therefore indefensible. For the council of ministers to have declared the imperfections of Mr. Noyes' ministry a sufficient cause of separation, powerful as was the influence of Mr. Noyes and his friends in the town and county, would have been a proceeding very irritating and unpopular. Under the pressure of this reason, probably, they chose to place the matter (correctly, as they doubtless thought) on a different ground.

Of the act of Mr. Noyes in excluding his opposers from the vote, on the question whether the church was conformed to the Saybrook Platform, I need not speak. It speaks for itself. Probably he considered them a party in the case. But on *that* question no one was on trial. If his opposers were a party in a case, which was to be affected by the decision of that question, so were his friends. And so was he, who exercised the important power of excluding them in a body from the vote.

2. It is equally obvious, that the *real cause* of the separation, was *love for the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel*, particularly the doctrines of human depravity, the

necessity of regeneration by the Spirit of God, and justification by faith ; *love for plain, earnest, and pungent preaching of those and kindred doctrines ; and love for the revival of religion.*\* Such was not Mr. Noyes' preaching. He was opposed to the revival and the experimental preachers by whom it was promoted ; and his church were fast uniting with him in that opposition. The first members of this church felt bound, therefore, peaceably and in charity, as they say, to withdraw, and form a distinct society, that they might put themselves under better advantages to worship God and secure their own spiritual edification. And who is there at this day, who will not say that they did essentially right ? Doubt-

\* That I am right in this and the preceding remark will appear from the following extract from the church records.

Feb. 20, 1758. *Voted and agreed,* That the platform of church discipline, agreed upon by a synod met at Cambridge, 1648, (i. e. the platform on which the independent churches stand,) as it has been the discipline made use of in this church, be still used as the rule of our discipline ; notwithstanding we are fully of opinion, that different sentiments, about the convenience or expediency of such circumstantial forms and modes of discipline, where the Essentials of it are preserved, and the great doctrines of the gospel and vital piety are maintained, constitute no just cause of separation, or breach of union in Worship, Ordinances, or Administrations, and we do declare, that if any of us should be called by Divine Providence to settle in any Church under an Association or *Presbytery*, where all the great doctrines of the gospel, were plainly, powerfully, and generally preached, and vital piety maintained, we should make no division, separation, or difficulty, on account of any circumstantial of discipline ; and we freely declare, that the great and principal design which we have had in view in all the transactions peculiar to our Society, has been, and still is, to preserve and maintain the great doctrines of the gospel, and to have them plainly and powerfully preached to, and entertained by us, and our posterity to the latest generation. Passed unanimously in the affirmative.

less they committed errors and extravagances, as did many good men under the preaching of Davenport, and even under that of Whitefield. But they were right in the position which, in the face of great difficulties, and opposition, and burdens, and self-denial, they took and maintained; and they deserve and will receive the thanks of later generations, who understand better than did that generation, the ways of God's Spirit. They were, in this place, the friends of the revival; and that, when the ancient church and its pastor, and the faculty and corporation of the college, indeed almost all the influence and power of the place, together with the strong political and ecclesiastical government of the county and colony, were strenuously opposed to that revival. They went hand in hand, as our records show, with Bellamy, and Pomeroy, and Wheelock, and Mills, and others, whose names are embalmed in the history of that wonderful "refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and will ever be fragrant among the churches of Connecticut: and, God being on their side, He that was for them being greater than those who were against them, they ultimately triumphed.

The *foundations of this church*, my brethren, are *love of evangelical doctrine, of ecclesiastical liberty, of revivals of religion*. Such ever be its *superstructure*.

## S E R M O N II.

### HISTORY OF THE CHURCH FROM ITS FORMATION TO THE PRESENT TIME.

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PSALM lxxvii, 11, 12, 13.—I will remember the works of the Lord ; surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of thy doings. Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary.

IN a previous discourse, I have given an account of the origin of this church, and of the peculiarities of the times in which it had its origin, so far only as seemed necessary to elucidate the distinctive character of itself and its founders.

The council which formed or re-established the church, left Mr. Graham, one of their number, to preach to them for a time, and advised them to apply to a convention of ministers, who were expected to meet at Wethersfield the next week, for advice as to some suitable person to be improved by them as a preacher. They accordingly applied to this convention, and were advised to the Rev. Mr. Wheelock,\* of Lebanon, an able, judicious, and eloquent friend of the revival, as a suitable person to assist

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\* Dr. Trumbull in his history thus characterizes Mr. Wheelock : “Mr., afterwards Doctor and President, Wheelock, was a gentleman of a comely figure, of a mild and winning aspect, his voice smooth and harmonious, the best, by far, that I ever heard. He had the entire command of it. His gesture was natural but not redundant. His preaching and addresses were close and pungent, and yet winning be-

them in their ministerial affairs. Upon this advice, on the 17th of May, by Mr. James Pierpont, their messenger, they requested Mr. Wheelock to make them a visit, and employ his ministerial labors among them for a time, and with some aspect to a future fixed improvement there, if Providence should open the way for it. In compliance with this request, Mr. Wheelock came on the 3d of June, and continued with them about a month, preaching, presiding in their meetings, and admitting members to full communion. But, as he was peaceably settled in an important place, and greatly esteemed and beloved by his people, and highly useful in the eastern part of the State, he thought it his duty to remain there.\*

At this time, about two months from the formation of the church, such additions had been made to it, that the number of its members was between seventy and eighty. After Mr. Wheelock's departure, the church invited Mr. Graham and Mr. Bellamy† to preach to them by turns.

yond almost all comparison, so that his audience would be melted even into tears before they were aware of it." Vol. II, p. 158. Dr. Wheelock was the founder and first president of Dartmouth College.

\* Church records, and Trumbull, Vol. II, p. 344.

† Dr. Trumbull thus gives the character of Mr. Bellamy as a preacher: "Mr., afterwards Dr. Bellamy, was a large and well built man, of a commanding appearance; had a smooth strong voice and could fill the largest house without any unnatural elevation. He possessed a truly great mind, generally preached without notes, had some point of doctrine commonly to establish, and would keep close to his point until he had sufficiently illustrated it; and then in an ingenious, close, and pungent manner, he would make the application. When he felt well, and was animated by a large and attentive audience, he would preach incomparably. Though he paid little attention to language, yet when he became warm and was filled with his subject, he would from the native

At the outset, and for many years, the church had to struggle with great difficulties. The act of toleration, of which they had availed themselves, only gave them the liberty of worshiping by themselves. It did not exempt them from taxation for the support of Mr. Noyes. So that their pecuniary burden was great. This, however, was slight, compared with the violent opposition which they met from the opposers of the revival, the Old Lights, as they were called. These were very numerous, and powerful, in Connecticut, embracing many of the leading ministers, and generally the magistrates and principal gentlemen. They employed all their art and power to suppress the revival, and to keep all ministers from abroad, who favored it, out of the colony, and to confine all, who favored it in the colony, to their own pulpits. The Old Light party was especially strong and active in New Haven county; and the powerful influence of the First Church and its pastor, and of the President and Corporation of the College,\* and of the Association† of

vigor of his soul, produce the most commanding strokes of eloquence, making his audience alive. There is nothing to be found in his writings, though a sound and great divine, equal to what was to be seen and heard in his preaching. His pulpit talents exceeded all his other gifts. It is difficult for any man, who never heard him, to form a just idea of the force and beauty of his preaching." Vol. II, p. 159.

\* Mr. Cooke was called to account before the corporation, of which he was a member, for assisting in the formation of this church, and found it expedient, such was the feeling against him, to resign his seat. College records.

† Dr. Trumbull says: "Of all the ministers and churches in the colony, those of the county of New Haven, manifested the greatest opposition to the work, which was carried on in the religious revival, and adopted the most severe and tyrannical measures to suppress it." See Vol. II, p. 262.

the county, leagued with the government of the commonwealth, was brought to bear upon this infant and feeble church.\*

A short time—two or three weeks—after the church was formed, the legislature of the colony, doubtless urged by ecclesiastical influence, especially from this county; passed a law, which would prevent them from employing any minister, without the consent of the pastor and the majority of the First Society. According to that law, if any *ordained* or *licensed* preacher should preach, or exhort, within the limits of any parish, without the consent of the pastor and majority of that parish, if he was from without the colony, he was to be *arrested, and carried out of the colony as a vagrant*. If he was from within the colony, he was to be deprived of his salary, and that without any trial, simply, upon information, whether true or false, lodged by any person with the clerk of his parish. This law also provided, that if any person *not licensed* to preach, should *exhort*, within the limits of any parish, without the consent of the pastor and majority of that parish, he might for every such offense be bound to keep the peace, by any assistant or justice of the peace, in the penal sum of one hundred pounds.†

For this law, the Association of New Haven county, in their meeting in September, 1742, expressed their thanks to the legislature, and prayed that it might continue in force.‡

\* See Trumbull, Vol. II, p. 344.

† See this law in Trumbull, Vol. II, p. 163.

‡ See Trumbull, Vol. II, p. 165, note. Dr. Trumbull says that this law, in part at least, had its origin in the Consociation of New Haven county.

Under this law, a minister, as judicious and distinguished as Mr. Pomeroy of Hebron, was twice arraigned before the legislature of the colony, and obliged to pay costs of prosecution, and bound to keep the peace in a penal sum of fifty pounds, and deprived of his lawful salary for seven years.\* Under this law, Rev. Samuel Finley, afterwards President of Princeton College, and whose name is familiar to all who have read the eloquent contrast by Dr. John Mason, between the death of David Hume and that of Samuel Finley, was arrested, and carried out of Connecticut as a vagrant, for preaching to a seceding church in Milford.† He returned very soon, and preached to this church; when he was again arrested, and transported as a vagrant.‡ He returned, and preached again to this church; when the legislature, on representation that he greatly disquieted and disturbed the people, passed an additional act, providing, that every person, transported under the former act, should pay the costs of his transportation; and if he should return again, and offend in the same way, that it should be the duty of any assistant or justice of the peace, to bind him to peaceable behavior in the penal sum of one hundred pounds.§

\* Trumbull, Vol. II, p. 167, and 175.      † Ibid, Vol. II, p. 177.

‡ See the History of the Great Awakening, by Jos. Tracy, p. 307. I have been informed by one of our citizens, that he has often heard his father say, that Mr. Finley was carried out of town on Monday, and that on the previous Sabbath, he was taken by the officer of justice to Mr. Noyes' church, and made to sit in the aisle. The object probably was to expose him as an offender against the laws, and to give him the privilege of hearing prayer and preaching, especially designed for his benefit.

§ See Trumbull, Vol. II, p. 174: also Great Awakening, p. 307.

The Association of New Haven county also, took up the matter of Mr. Finley's preaching in Milford and New Haven, and formally resolved that no member of the Presbytery of New Brunswick (a New Light presbytery) should be admitted into any of their pulpits, till satisfaction had been made for Mr. Finley's preaching within their bounds.\*

On the 18th of the next January, as we learn from the records of the County Court, the church applied to that Court through a committee, requesting that Mr. James Sprout† a preacher, might be permitted to take oaths, and make subscription, according to the Act of Toleration, in order that he might be allowed to preach to them, and was refused. This seems to have been the only attempt to have a stated ministry after the enactment of the above law, for five or six years. They knew, probably, that they should be refused the privilege of hearing any man of their choice.

At the same session at which this extraordinary law was enacted, the Assembly advised the faculty of the College, to take all proper care to prevent the students from imbibing any of the prevailing errors; and that those who would not be orderly, should be expelled. Accordingly, the students were forbidden to attend the meetings of this church: and it was, partly, for his once disobeying this prohibition, in order to hear Rev. Gilbert Tennent

\* Trumbull, II, p. 263. Great Awakening, p. 308.

† This Mr. Sprout, was graduated at Yale College, in 1741, and was afterwards settled over the fourth society in Guilford, and then over a Presbyterian church in Philadelphia—a distinguished preacher and a D. D. This refusal was, as it appears to me, contrary to the Act of Toleration—*illegal* oppression.

of New Jersey, that David Brainerd was expelled from College.\*

In 1743, the Assembly, "in order to suppress enthusiasm," as was said, repealed the Act of Toleration of which the founders of this church had availed themselves when they seceded: so that thereafter, no class of men could be permitted to separate from the established churches, and worship according to the dictate of their consciences, unless leave should be granted, by special act of legislature: and moreover, it was intimated in the act of repeal, that *congregationalists or presbyterians*, who should apply for such leave, would meet with no indulgence from the Assembly.†

These persecuting laws, (which were by no means a dead letter,) like oil poured on the fire, increased the extravagance and error, and disorder, which had begun to alloy the blessed effects of the revival—extravagance and error and disorder, resulting from the previous low state of religion, the prevailing ignorance as to the distinguishing traits of genuine and false religious experience, and from the unfortunate encouragement given by some leading friends of the revival, particularly Whitefield and

\* See Edwards' Life of Brainerd.

† Tracy, in his History of the Great Awakening, in referring to the repeal of this Act, says—"It (the Act of Toleration) provided that such as soberly dissented from the prevailing worship and belief, might, on taking certain oaths required in the English Act of Toleration, be exempt from taxation for the support of the ministers from whom they dissented." This is a mistake—the Act *exempted no one from taxation* for the support of the established order of worship. It only exempted sober dissenters, on their taking the prescribed oaths, *from the penalties of non-conformity*—permitted them to worship in their own way. They were still *taxed* for the support of the ministers from whom they dissented. See the Act itself, note to p. 30.

Edwards, to "outcries and bodily agitations"—extravagance and error and disorder, far surpassing any that has been witnessed in modern awakenings, and which were at length so great among a class of people called Separatists,\* and so wide-spread and lasting in their evil effects, that for a half century, sober-minded people feared and shunned revivals, as only another name for scenes of confusion and evil. That these extravagances ever prevailed to any considerable extent, among the members of this church, I can find no evidence.†

\* For an account of the Separatists and their extravagances, see Trumbull, Vol. II. Some of their churches became Baptist, and yet exist: but most of them soon became extinct. They were most numerous in the eastern part of this State.

† Chauncy in his work on the revival, gives a letter from a friend in New Haven, which speaks of "visions and trances which have befel sundry persons in this place." The letter gives an account of two young women who fell into a trance at "a conference meeting, or private fast, kept by a member of the *New Light party*." They were exceedingly filled with zeal, and their affections raised very high—were in some degree deprived of their bodily strength, yet able by turns to pray and speak to the unconverted. They remained thus, that night and the next day. The next evening, as they were walking the street, they were both so overpowered by something or other, that they fell down, unable to walk; and so continued for some time, lying in the street, like persons dead or asleep. They partially recovered, and were taken into a house, and remained for about a week, "in a sort of extasie"—either lying as though in sleep, or uttering extatic expressions of joy, of the love of Christ, of love to Him, of concern for souls and the like; or praying with great earnestness; or warning and exhorting the great numbers who came to see them—making strange declarations, as, *that they had been to Heaven, had seen the book of life, the names of many persons of their acquaintance written in it, had seen the seats of the blessed, and their own seats empty, &c.* See Chauncy, p. 128. This is the chief record to be found of extravagances among the members of this church.

Another embarrassment of this church, was the want of a suitable place of public worship. Their meetings, for some years, were held in the house of Mr. Timothy Jones.\* Early in 1744, they began their preparations to erect a house of worship, upon the lot on the southeast corner of Elm and Church streets, having been refused permission to place it (where the house of the First Society was) on the public square. The *alienation and hostility* which had grown up between the two churches, and the excitement which agitated the community, when it was known that the new meeting house was to be raised, have no parallel in these times.† The First Society sent a committee to remonstrate against the raising of the house, declaring it very hurtful to their society and a *public nuisance*, and

\* This house is now standing on the northwest corner of State and Court streets.

† The following facts will illustrate this remark. The father of one of the deacons of this church, was deacon of the First Church. The child of the son died. The father in a written note declined to attend the funeral, because the son belonged to the "New Light" church.

After the frame of the new meeting house was prepared to be raised, the long sticks of timber were cut in two, in the night. They were replaced by others, over which the New Lights kept guard every night.

The hostility between the two parties was kept alive and aggravated, by the collection, by force of law, of the tax upon the seceders for the support of Mr. Noyes. Many went to gaol rather than pay it—among others, deacon Samuel Bishop and John Mix.

It is pleasant to note the contrast between the state of feeling *then*, and *now*, in the two churches, toward each other. Their fellowship now, could hardly be more complete. Uniting in the service of Sabbath evening, in sacramental lectures, and the monthly concert of prayer, and in the various benevolent operations of the day, both churches and pastors, see eye to eye, and walk together in beautiful and delightful harmony.

desiring those engaged in it forthwith to desist.\* They also appointed a committee to take advice, and represent to the honorable General Assembly, the doings of the Separatists, as the members of this church were called, (in case they did not desist,) and to prosecute them in the law, if it should be thought advisable.

How long it was ere the house was so far completed, as to be ready for public worship, I have been unable to ascertain.†

From the time Mr. Wheelock left the church in July, 1742, to 1751, there were no *church* records kept; and as no society had as yet been formed, there were of course no *society* records—my information is derived from other sources. So far as I can learn from these sources, the laws to which I have referred, together with the influence of the magistracy of this place, and the ministry of this place and vicinity, had their designed effect on this

\* When the builders and their assistants were in the act of raising one side of the frame, this remonstrance was read; the reading so diverted the attention of the men employed, that the part of the frame which they were raising, came down with a great crash: whereupon the Old Lights cried out, that the Lord was evidently against the building of the house. The frame however was raised on that same day.

† This meeting house stood on the spot now occupied by the block of elegant houses owned by Mr. St. John. Its front was upon Elm street. In 1764, it was enlarged, at the expense of individuals wanting seats. An addition, sixteen feet in width, was built on the westerly side—the roof of the addition joining the old part at right angles. A steeple, sixteen feet square, was also built in front of the new part. By this addition, the front of the building was changed from Elm to Church street; and the west front was brought, by means of the steeple, out to the street. The steeple indeed encroached on the side walk. From its color it was called “the Blue Meeting House.”

church, depriving its members of any such stated preaching as would be in accordance with their views.

Sometime in the spring or summer of 1745, Whitefield passed through this place, and (in accordance with a recommendation from the General Association of the state, that he be not admitted to the churches,) being excluded from Mr. Noyes' pulpit, he preached from a platform in the street, in front of Mr. James Pierpont's house, to an immense congregation on the green.\*

Three years after this time, in 1748, owing to the great increase of those who were judicious friends of the revival—on the one hand acknowledging and rejoicing in its wide-spread blessings, the renewing of the churches, and the conversion, as was estimated, of thirty or forty thousand souls in New England alone, and on the other hand, testifying against and restraining its extravagances—and owing also to that reaction, which is sure to follow persecution, in a community which enjoys any degree of freedom, the influence of the magistracy and the Assembly, was less hostile to the New Lights. Indeed the New Lights were becoming politically formidable.

Encouraged by this state of things, this church made an attempt, the first for many years, to have a *stated minister*. In order, the more effectually to provide for his support, as they could not yet hope to procure an incorporation from the legislature, they formed a society by *voluntary compact*; embodying themselves, by solemn deed, regularly signed, sealed and attested, as they express it, into “church state and distinct religious society

\* See Bacon's Hist. Disc., p. 223.

and congregation." This compact was signed by sixty men and one woman.\*

On the second Monday in March, about two weeks after the society was formed, they voted as a society, unanimously, "to invite and call the Rev. Mr. John Curtiss, to the pastoral office and work of the ministry among them, correspondent with what the church had some time before done, and also, that they would annually yield an honorable support to the Rev. Mr. John Curtiss, so long as he continued their minister, and they respectively continued under his ministry."†

It does not appear that Mr. Curtiss was *ordained* as pastor of the church and society. He continued to act as pastor for about two years. All that I can learn of

\* The following is an extract from the compact. " We and our adherents having before our eyes, the glory of God, and the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and only Savior Jesus Christ ; the reformation of religion within ourselves, and our religious society to which we belong, in doctrine, worship, government and discipline, according to the will of God made manifest to us in his holy scriptures, according to the godly in former generations, and according to the laudable example of our venerable and pious progenitors ; having been embodied into church state, and distinct religious society and congregation among ourselves by mutual consent heretofore :

" Now for the preservation of said religious society, by voluntary compact, and setting up and maintaining the public worship of God therein, and for the promotion of the godly ends aforesaid : We covenant and agree, bind, and firmly oblige ourselves, our heirs &c. to be, and continue to be one society *ex pacto* in all respects, and to all the good ends that the ecclesiastical societies are, by the laws of the colony enabled to act, by their vote and suffrage." For this compact in full, see Society Records.

† Which honorable support, was afterwards defined to mean, £350, old tenor, a dwelling house, forty loads of wood, and the avails of occasional contributions.

him, is, that he came from the eastern part of the state, and that he was an acceptable preacher. Of his history, after he left this place, I can learn nothing.

On the 11th of March, 1751, the committee of the church, having heard that the Rev. Samuel Bird had been dismissed from the church in Dunstable, Mass., by advice of one of the council for his dismissal, invited him to visit this church, which he did in the month of May following. Some time in the month of June, he was unanimously invited by the church, with the unanimous concurrence of the society, to become their pastor. He gave them encouragement, that he would comply with their invitation, provided that their difficulties with the ancient church could be removed. Accordingly, for the removal of these difficulties, a council was called, which convened at this place in September.\* This council having considered the difficulties, said that the request for advice was reasonable; but as their number was small, consisting of the pastors and delegates of five churches, they advised to invite additional members, and adjourned to the 15th of October. In the mean time, the members of this church, that there might be no obstacle to reconciliation on their part, sent to Mr. Noyes and the First Church, a confession,† acknowledg-

\* This council consisted of Rev. Messrs. Philemon Robbins, Joseph Bellamy, Eleazar Wheelock, Samuel Hopkins, and Benjamin Pomeroy, with their churches.

† This confession is as follows:—"To the Rev. Joseph Noyes, pastor of a church of Christ in New Haven. To be communicated.

*Reverend and beloved*—We, the subscribers, who, some years since, withdrew from the public preaching of the word and ordinances in said church, for reasons which we then thought to be just, weighty, and reasonable, which we delivered in writing to said pastor, to be communicated, and which causes we do still think to be just, weighty, and reasonable. As to those of you who do not think as we do, we would

ing the informality of their secession, and condemning that informality, together with whatever of heat and bitterness of spirit had appeared in any of them, and asking forgiveness therefor: which confession, so far as appears, received no notice.

On the 15th of October, the council convened again, consisting of the pastors and delegates of thirteen churches. It included all those of whom Trumbull makes honorable mention, as the most zealous and laborious friends of the revival, and some who are still greatly distinguished as theologians.\*

endeavor to entertain charitable thoughts of, notwithstanding, and desire the same candor from you; remembering that the great God alone is lord of the conscience; and that both you and we must stand or fall at his impartial tribunal. Nevertheless, considering the public relation we stood in with you, our brethren, we should have exhibited to the pastor, in writing, the articles of our grievances, to be published to you, and after waiting a reasonable time, he neglecting his duty, should have complained to some neighboring church or churches for relief, before withdrawing from your fellowship and communion; which conduct would have been our duty; neglect whereof we do readily condemn; together with all heat and bitterness of spirit, that has at any time appeared in any of us toward you, or any of you, as being offensive to God, and unbecoming to Christians, for which we ask your forgiveness; begging an interest in the prayers of all God's children, that we may behave for the future, as becometh the gospel of Christ. Upon the whole, we think, that afterwards, we used all possible endeavors to bring matters to a proper issue; but not succeeding, we thought it to be for the glory of God, the peace of our own souls, and for our edification, to be with others, a distinct society. We conclude, wishing you all needed blessings."

\* The council consisted of the following ministers, with delegates from their churches, viz. John Graham, Jedediah Mills, Philemon Robbins, Daniel Humphreys, Ebenezer White, Eleazar Wheelock, Benjamin Pomeroy, Benajah Case, Joseph Bellamy, Samuel Hopkins, James Sprout, Jonathan Lee, and John Searle.

The General Assembly were then in session in New Haven; and having learned from the growing power of the New Lights, that it was expedient to favor rather than persecute them, and seeing that the case involved the peace and welfare, not only of New Haven, but of the whole colony, sent to the ecclesiastical council a formal vote, advising that the case should be heard by a mutual council.

Accordingly, a committee\* was appointed to wait on Mr. Noyes, to learn whether he would comply with the advice of the honorable Assembly; but Mr. Noyes, according to the account of the committee, using several evasions, and refusing to promise, the council proceeded to the examination and installation of Mr. Bird; advising, however, that the church should always stand ready to join Mr. Noyes and his church, in calling a mutual council for the settlement of difficulties.†

\* Consisting of Rev. Messrs. Mills, Wheelock, and Bellamy, with several of the delegates.

† For a more minute account of the transactions of the council, the church, and Mr. Noyes, see Church Records, or Trumbull, II, p. 347, or Bacon's Hist. Disc., p. 225. Mr. Bird's salary was fixed at £700 old tenor; the value of the pound being settled at 52 shillings to the dollar, making £700 equal to \$250. The society also voted him £1,000, old tenor, settlement money. They gave him, moreover, the house and lot which had been returned by Mr. Curtiss, on condition that he should pay for what had been laid out upon it after Mr. Curtiss' departure, amounting to £1,000. This house is still standing in Elm street, and is owned by Mr. Northrop, grand-son of Mr. Bird.

It appears by a vote of the society, that in 1755, old tenor had depreciated to 72 shillings to the dollar.

On the 1st of October, 1753, the following vote was passed, "That the committee for the time being, shall hereafter have power to call a meeting of this society, by sending a *drum* about the First Society in New Haven, to make proclamation at the corners, at the least, of the middle square, (the two greens,) that the members of the Tolerated Society in New Haven, are desired to meet," &c.

Mr. Bird was born at Dorchester in Massachusetts, March 27th, 1724; was ordained pastor of a church in Dunstable, on the Merrimack river, some time in 1748, where he continued between two and three years. He was twenty-seven years of age when he was installed over this church. His form and manner were commanding, his voice powerful, his elocution handsome and impressive, his sentiments evangelical. He was of course a popular preacher; and his settlement greatly accelerated the growth of the church and society.

About four years after the installation of Mr. Bird, it was apparent that soon the members of Mr. Bird's congregation, who had been retained and taxed as members of the First Society, would be a majority in that society. And the Old Lights, who had refused to let the New Lights go, so long as they could govern them, and tax them for the support of a minister whom they did not hear, now, when the New Lights were fast becoming the stronger and governing party in the society, began to feel as though they should be very glad to get rid of them. On the other hand, the New Lights, who in the days of their weakness, petitioned for permission to go out empty-handed, now, in the time of their approaching power, refused to go without an equal portion of the property both of the society and the church.

In February, 1755, the society voted, "humbly to request the General Assembly to disenable the dissenters and their adherents from voting in the society, or to set them off from the society." Against this request, the members of this church and their friends protested, and the request was not granted.

Two years after, in January, 1757, a request was again sent to the General Assembly, to divide them into two dis-

tinct societies, and in order that such division might be made according to preferences, that liberty should be given to all the inhabitants, to enrol themselves under the general names of *Mr. Noyes' party*, and *Mr. Bird's party*. Immediately after sending this request, the enrolment was effected, and the result of it was, that Mr. Noyes' party numbered 111, Mr. Bird's party, 212.

The request of the society was not acted upon at the May session of the Assembly, but continued till the session in October. In June, there was an adjourned meeting of the society, at which the members of this church and their adherents, being a strong majority, began to exercise their power, at the expense of the Old Lights. In that and two or three successive meetings, they withdrew the request for a division, called Mr. Bird to be the minister of the First Society, appointed the meeting house of this church as the place of public worship for that society on the Sabbath, received Mr. Bird's acceptance, voted him a salary, and for reasons stated, desired Mr. Noyes to desist from ministerial labor, and voted to make no farther provision for his support. They also made, in the name of Mr. Bird's adherents, a proposal to the Old Lights to divide the society, on condition of a division of the property of the church and society, by arbitrators mutually chosen; which proposal was very properly rejected, they having no just claim to the property of the *church*.\* About

\* The proposal to divide in this manner the property of the *society merely*, would have been entirely fair. The peculiar property of the First *Church*, as they had left that church, they could not justly claim. It was not unnatural, however, for them to suppose, that a portion of the little property of the church was a small indemnity for fifteen years of unjust taxation.

a year after these proceedings, the parties mutually agreed to request a division of the society by the Assembly, and to leave all questions of difference to be decided by their wisdom. The Assembly complied with this request, making Mr. Noyes' adherents the "First Society," and Mr. Bird's adherents the "White Haven Society," and dividing the property of the original society between them equally.\*

The distinguished men, who assisted in forming this church, and who, for years, had a watchful eye over it, had taken strong ground, with Edwards, against the half-way covenant. They imparted their principles on this subject to this church; which, for the first eighteen years, permitted none to come to the Lord's supper, or to receive baptism for their children, except on profession of saving faith. But in the records for the year 1760, I find the following: "Voted and determined, by a great majority, that the infants of such as own the covenant,† (being civil and moral persons,) shall be admitted to baptism."

The introduction of this old and corrupt practice, laid the foundation of a future division in the society, as we shall see hereafter.

In December, 1767, Mr. Bird requested a dismission, on account of his ill health. Accordingly, he was dismissed, by a council, on the 19th of January, 1768, in good and regular standing, and with the expression, by the church and society, of their "grateful sense of his great and eminent services."

\* For this Act of Assembly, and the exact terms of division, see Soc. Records. On the 7th of February, 1760, the society proceeded formally to settle Mr. Bird. His salary was fixed at £90, lawful money, and 20 cords of wood, half walnut and half oak.

† For this half-way covenant, see Appendix.

Mr. Bird, who was at his dismission forty four years of age, continued to make New Haven the place of his residence; preaching occasionally, and acting for a time under an appointment as chaplain in the revolutionary army. He died, at the age of sixty years, on the 3d of May, 1784, of inoculation for the small pox, and was buried at midnight.\*

Mr. Bird was a man of sincere and zealous piety, and, as I have already said, of commanding appearance, powerful voice, handsome and impressive elocution, and evangelical sentiments. He was not educated at college,† and was more distinguished for his popular elocution, and effective exhibition of plain doctrines and practical subjects, than for severe study or profound reasoning.‡

This society was greatly prospered under his ministry, so that it became much the largest in the town, and was under the necessity of enlarging its house of worship, which was done in the year 1764.§ From the formation of the church to the close of Mr. Bird's ministry, a

\* Dr. Stiles' Lit. Diary.

† The only colleges in the country at the time Mr. Bird entered the ministry were Harvard, William and Mary's, and Yale, and his name does not appear on the catalogues of either of these institutions.

‡ Dr. Trumbull says, Vol. II, p. 350: "Mr. Bird was a popular man, made a manly appearance, spoke well, and had a very great talent, especially in speaking at the grave on funeral occasions."

Dr. Stiles in his Lit. Diary, in noting his death, makes this single remark, "He was a man of religion."

Mr. Bird married for his first wife, Mable, daughter of Hon. —— Jenner, of Charlestown, Mass., who died early, leaving one child, a son. His second wife was Sarah, daughter of John Prout, Esq., of New Haven, who had twelve children. One of these was the second wife of Deac. Levi Ives, and died in the summer of 1838. Another was the mother of Mr. R. E. Northrop of this place.

§ See note to p. 50.

space of twenty six years, two hundred and three united with the church, of which, as nearly as I can ascertain from imperfect records, forty three were those who were constituted the church in 1742; seventy eight joined them previous to Mr. Bird's installation, and eighty two during his ministry.

On the 28th of November, 1768, the society concurred with a vote of the church,\* of September 16th, in calling Mr. Jonathan Edwards, who for some time had been preaching among them, to be their pastor; which call he accepted on the 14th of the next month.

Mr. Edwards was the second son, and ninth child of Jonathan Edwards, of Northampton, one of the brightest names, as to intellectual and moral excellence, in the history of the church. His mother was Sarah Pierpont, the daughter of Rev. James Pierpont, pastor of the First Church in New Haven, and sister of Mr. James Pierpont, one of the founders of this church. She is represented as a most beautiful, intelligent, and accomplished lady, and (what was more important in every relation, and especially in relation to her children,) a rare example of early piety, and in after life, as a Christian and Christian mother, as near a perfect model as is often seen on earth.†

\* This is the true Congregational mode. In calling a minister the church acts first, votes the call, and the society concurs. In this society this order has, through inadvertence probably, been inverted. In giving invitations to settle for some years past, the society has acted first and the church concurred. This is not as it should be; and has by some councils been esteemed an error of such importance, that they have refused to ordain the individual thus called, until it was rectified. For obvious reasons, the church should have the prominent part in calling a minister.

† Whitefield, during his visit to New England, went to Northampton and spent two days with Mr. Edwards. He says, "he felt wonderful sat-

Under the care of such parents, his childhood must have been moulded by the happiest influences. When he was six years old his father removed with his family to Stockbridge, as a missionary to the Indians, who were then almost the sole inhabitants of the place. Here he could have few advantages out of his father's family. Constantly associating with the Indians, he became very skillful in their language, which he retained through life. When he was in his tenth year, his father sent him, on what was then a most difficult and dangerous journey, to the Six Nations, that he might learn their language, and be qualified for a missionary to them. There he remained about a year, till by the dangers of the French war, he was obliged to return, which he did in the depth of winter. The endurance of these early hardships evinces great courage and fortitude in one so young, and had, doubtless, an important influence in the formation of his character.

In January, 1758, his father removed to Princeton, having been appointed President of the College in that place. During the next nine months, both his parents

isfaction in being at the house of Mr. Edwards. He is a son himself, and hath also a daughter of Abraham for his wife. A sweeter couple I have not yet seen. Their children were dressed, not in silks and satins, but plain, as becomes the children of those who in all things ought to be examples of Christian simplicity. She is a woman adorned with a meek and quiet spirit, and talked so feelingly and solidly of the things of God, and seemed to be such a help-meet to her husband, that she caused me to renew those prayers which for some months I have put up to God, that he would send me a daughter of Abraham to be my wife. I find upon many accounts, it is my duty to marry. Lord, I desire to have no choice of my own. Thou knowest my circumstances."

Tracy, from whose "Great Awakening" I quote this, adds, "He had not yet learned, if he ever did, that God is not pleased to make such 'sweet couples' out of persons who have no choice of their own."

were removed by death, the father in March, the mother in October. Thus, at the age of twelve, were his earthly prospects clouded by affliction and poverty. But with that firmness and perseverance which had been formed by early hardship, he determined to go forward in obtaining a liberal education. Aided somewhat by family friends, he entered Princeton College, and was graduated in September, 1765, at the age of twenty years.

It was during his college course, and in a time of general awakening in Princeton, in the summer of 1763, that he was deeply impressed with a sense of his lost condition as a sinner, and his need of salvation through a crucified Redeemer, and obtained hope of reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ. His diary at this time evinces the thoroughness and heartiness of his consecration to God's service. He was awakened, and through divine grace brought to repentance, under the impressive preaching of the Rev. Dr. Finley—the same man who was carried out of the colony of Connecticut as a vagrant, for preaching to this church.

Soon after leaving college, Mr. Edwards commenced the study of divinity with Rev. Dr. Bellamy, the friend and correspondent of his father, and whose name has been brought to your notice in connexion with the origin and difficulties of this church. In about a year, he was licensed to preach by the Litchfield Association, and soon was appointed a tutor in Princeton College.

A few months after taking that station, he was appointed professor of languages and logic in the same institution, which appointment he declined. One who knew him well,\* speaking of this period of his life, says :

\* Rev. Dr. Yates, Professor in Union College during the presidency of Dr. Edwards.

"The name of Jonathan Edwards was associated with great literary and religious attainments in the estimation of those who in his day had been connected with the college in New Jersey."

He was a tutor at Princeton for two years. During this time he occasionally preached in his vacations to this society, and, after Mr. Bird's dismission, was employed to supply the pulpit, till he was invited to assume the pastoral office.

Mr. Edwards, in common with his father, and with those who in that day were called "New Divinity men," was strenuously opposed to the *half-way covenant*, and probably made its renunciation by the church a condition of his acceptance of their call. It appears from the church records, that after their presentation, and before his acceptance, of their call, the church voted to *abolish the half-way covenant practice*. On this account, principally, and, partly, on account of dissatisfaction at the dismission of Mr. Bird,\* a protest against Mr. Edwards' ordination was sent in to the council which met for the purpose of inducting him into office, signed by sixty eight persons. The council, however, after serious deliberation, proceeded to ordain him on the next day, the 5th of January, 1769.† In these days, to settle a pastor

\* Though the only reason given by Mr. Bird for requesting a dismission was his ill health, yet it is evident that a considerable part of the society desired his dimission independently of that reason. It is also evident, that a part of the society wished his continuance, and were dissatisfied at his dismission.

† The salary agreed on at Mr. E.'s settlement was £100 lawful money, the use of a dwelling house, and a supply of fire wood. The society purchased for his use the house now owned and occupied by Judge Baldwin, in Church street, between Elm and Wall streets. Af-

in the face of so large a minority, would be considered a most hazardous and unwise experiment. Probably it would have been so considered then, in *ordinary circumstances*. But Mr. Edwards was considered by the members of the council, a man of uncommon talents and promise, and they hoped therefore that when once settled, he would unite the congregation. But they did not fully understand independent Congregationalists, who had already taken one lesson in the art of secession.

During the next eight months, several attempts at reconciliation,\* were made by the parties. The opposition were told to try for a colleague. They proposed Mr. Bird, but Mr. Edwards' friends would not accept this proposal. After hearing Mr. Edwards a few Sabbaths, the opposition were still more dissatisfied, and the two parties appointed committees of conference. The committee of the opposition, proposed Mr. Fish (of Stonington) as colleague. The committee of Mr. Edwards' adherents, refused to accept this proposal, unless Mr. Fish would agree to preach the same doctrines with Mr. Edwards, and they would bind themselves to be content with Mr. Edwards half the time. Nothing, therefore, was accomplished by the conference; and the next month, September 4th, 1769, the opposition at a full meeting, resolved unanimously, to "go off and worship by themselves." They met in the State House, until their new meeting house was finished: which was in December of the following year, about eighteen months after their decision to secede.

terwards, in 1783, the society conveyed the absolute property of the house to Mr. Edwards, in consideration of £250, and that he would relinquish all legal claim to a greater salary than £100 per annum.

\* See Records of Fair Haven Society.

That house stood on the ground now occupied by the house in which we are assembled.\*

In June, 1771, they were constituted a church, with the name of the *Fair Haven Church*, by the Rev. Jedidiah Mills and Rev. Benjamin Pomeroy: one of whom was of the council, which formed the White Haven church, and both, of the council which installed Mr. Bird. That church of course adopted the half-way covenant.†

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\* I find in Dr. Stiles' Diary and Journal, the following:—"I measured the brick meeting house,  $72\frac{1}{2}$  feet long and 50 feet wide, so equal to an area of 3600 feet. I measured Mr. Edwards' (the White Haven,) 60 feet square, 3600 square feet area. Mr. Mather's (the Fair Haven,) said to be of the same dimensions with Mr. Whittlesey's. So all three nearly equal.

† There is a discrepancy, more apparent than real, as to the number of persons who opposed Mr. Edwards, between the Records of the Fair Haven and White Haven churches. The White Haven Records say, "Upon examination of the list of the rateable estate given in to the council, it appeared, so far as we could learn, that of the aggrieved, there were but about twenty five *lawful voters*, and that the proportion as to interest of all the aggrieved, was less than one fourth of the rateable estate in said Society." Minutes of the Council.

On the other hand, the council, which, two years after, constituted the Fair Haven church, say in their minutes, "We, the subscribers, being desired by a number that dissented from the church and society of White Haven, to the number of about seventy male members, mostly heads of families; considering the character and circumstances of the aggrieved, that there is a comfortable prospect of their maintaining the worship and ordinances of Christ among them; considering also, the encouragement their brethren and the venerable council that ordained the Rev. Mr. Edwards, gave them of setting them off, if upon trial they found they could not be edified, or contented under his ministry, &c. &c., are of opinion that they ought to be set apart as a distinct church and congregation by themselves," &c.

There must have been in the opposition, nearly seventy men—this is not contradicted. On the other hand, that only twenty five of these

This secession greatly weakened the White Haven society, and left only eleven *male* members in the church. Still, however, the society was as large as any in the town,\* and by the secession was left in peace.† Mr.

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were lawful voters, is not contradicted. Perhaps a large part, as often happens, had neglected the proper measures for being enrolled as voters.

\* In 1782, more than ten years after this, and when the Fair Haven church had greatly increased, Dr. Stiles gives the number of the several congregations as follows:—Rev. Mr. Whittlesey's 900, Rev. Mr. Edwards' 800, Rev. Mr. Mather's 950, Rev. Mr. Hubbard's (Episcopal) 250, Yale College, 220.

† To show the changes which have been made respecting singing, I copy the following from the White Haven church records:

Jan. 31, 1771. A proposal was made to the church to introduce the custom of singing in public worship, *without reading the line as has kitherto been the custom*. Subject deferred to next sacramental lecture.

It was also proposed at the same time, that the church would fix upon a number of tunes which should be sung and no other, which was voted, and a committee appointed to report tunes accordingly. At the next lecture, the above proposals were considered and indefinitely postponed.

In October, of the same year, the following was entered on the society's record: "Voted that those persons who are singers in this congregation, be desired to sit in the gallery together." This probably was the first formation of a regular choir.

In November of the same year, at the church meeting, the proposal as to the selection of tunes was again made, and a committee appointed to select tunes. At an adjourned meeting, that committee reported thirty five tunes, and were directed to select out of those thirty, and to arrange the said thirty tunes into proper order under six different heads or classes, and it was voted that these tunes be sung hereafter, generally in that order, five on a Sabbath for six Sabbaths, and then to begin again, and so on in continued rotation.

The committee reported the following tunes, in the following order: 1st Sabbath, Old Savoy, Little Marlboro', Nomure, St. Helena, Bangor;

Edwards labored with unwearied diligence. He confined his labors, however, principally to his study and the pulpit; thinking, as did his father, that he could be more usefully employed there, than in pastoral visitation: (for which labor, he did not think himself very well qualified.) He was considered, (as undoubtedly he was,) the ablest advocate of what in those times was called, "New Divinity," and which was then as unpleasant in the eyes of the old Calvinists of the stamp of Dr. Stiles, as has been New Divinity or New Haven Theology, in the eyes of many in these latter days.\*

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2d Sabbath, Windsor, Bath, Guilford, Plymouth, Wantage; 3d Sabbath, Angel's Hymn, Isle of Wight, Bethesda, New York, Worksop; 4th Sabbath, 100 New, Bedford, Southwell, Low Dutch, Wendover; 5th Sabbath, St. Martin's, All Saints, Landaff, 25th Psalm tune, Stafford; 6th Sabbath, Dalston, Winchester, Broomsgrove, New Fiftieth, Putney.

In January 10, 1773, a joint committee of the church and society was appointed to agree on regulations for singing in public worship; which reported March 31st, 1774, that the number of tunes should henceforth be twenty five (passed by a great majority); and that, according to their opinion, it would be best to go into the practice, which obtains in so many other places, of singing without reading each line of the psalm by itself, (passed in the affirmative.)

\* Evidence of this is abundant, in Dr. Stiles' Lit. Diary. The following are samples. Speaking of Mr. Timothy Jones, an eminent merchant in this place, and a member of this church, he says, "After the death of Mr. Pierpont, he never was blest with a ministry to his evangelical taste. Dr. Owen, Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Mather, Mr. Pemberton, and President Edwards, were divines to his taste. He never could abide New Divinity. He loved the Puritan doctrines, without those *innovations* which make God most holy and blessed, the intentional Author of all moral evil, the Devil of the universe."

"I received a letter from the Rev. Mr. Hopkins, of Newport, wherein he says, speaking of the state of religion, 'Every thing is

After a ministry of more than twenty five years, he was dismissed by an ecclesiastical council at the mutual request of himself and the society. The reason given

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dark and discouraging here with respect to the all-important interest. The people are going on from bad to worse :—Neither your people or mine, are disposed to attend public worship constantly, except a few individuals. There is but little encouragement to preach where there is so little attention, and so very little concern about any thing invisible.'

"Remark 1. Very lamentable is the state of religion in Newport, and partly that they will not attend public worship. But, 2. One occasion of this negligence, is *Brother Hopkins' New Divinity*. He has preached his own congregation almost away, or into indifference. He has fifty or sixty or more families of his own congregation in town, and might easily command a good assembly, if his preaching was as acceptable as his moral character. My congregation in town, are seventy or eighty families, and would gladly attend such preaching as Dr. Owen's or Dr. Doddridge's, or preachers of far lower abilities, provided they were *eiusdem farinæ* with the first Puritan divines. 3. Although New Divinity preachers collect some large congregations, in some parts, yet their preaching is acceptable *not for the new tenets*, but for its containing the *good old doctrines of grace*, on which the New Gentlemen are *very sound, clear and full*. In other parts, where the neighboring ministers generally preach the old Calvinistic doctrines, the people begin to be tired with the incessant inculcation of the *unintelligible and shocking new points*, especially that an unconverted man, had better be killing his father and mother, than praying for converting grace ; that true repentance implies a willingness and desire to be damned for the glory of God ; that we are to give God thanks, that he has caused Adam to sin, and involved all his posterity in total depravity, and that Judas betrayed, and the Jews crucified Christ ; that the children of none but communicants are to be baptized, &c. ; that the churches and ministers, are so corrupt and Laodicean, and have so intermixt with the world, that the New Divinity, churches and ministers, cannot hold communion with them, but must, and do, recede, and sequester themselves." Frequently in his Journal, he speaks of "*the Eurekas of New Divinity.*" It is evident from the testimony of Dr. Stiles, that the New Divinity men of that day, seriously intended to divide the Congregational churches into two denominations.

by the society was, that they were unable to support their minister. All parties, the church, the society, and the council, united in the most ample testimonials to his faithfulness and his abilities. He left them, earnestly and tenderly commanding them in his farewell discourse, to God and the word of his grace.

During his ministry, ninety six were admitted to the church. This would not be considered good success in ministerial labor in these days; but those times were peculiar. The great revival, owing to the wildness and extravagance of its injudicious friends, and still more to the opposition and persecution of its enemies, was followed by a lamentable reaction, and decline of vital piety. Revivals were in discredit, and almost unknown for half a century, and meetings for prayer were disreputable. His ministry was, moreover, the period of the excitements, agitations, alarms, anxieties, temptations, and corrupting influences, which preceded, accompanied, and followed the war of the Revolution.\* In about nine months after his dismissal, Mr. Edwards was again settled in Colebrook in Litchfield county; where he preached to an affectionate and united people, till he was elected, in May, 1799, to the presidency of Union College.

His presidency was terminated in two years, by his death, which occurred on the 1st of August, 1801. His last words, when the hand of death was on him, were: "It becomes us cheerfully to submit to the will of God. He is wise and gracious. He orders every thing for

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\* He was an ardent friend and fearless advocate of the Revolution. See his sermon on "Submission to Rulers."

the best. The blood of Christ is my only ground of hope.”\*

My limits forbid any thing more than an outline of his character.

In person he was slender, erect, and somewhat above the ordinary stature. His complexion was dark; his features, bold and prominent; his hair, raven black; and his eye, remarkably keen and intelligent. His Christian char-

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\* “His remains were interred in the Scotch Presbyterian church-yard in Schenectady. His funeral, according to his own desire, was conducted with as little parade and expense as was decent, and the expenditure which would have been required by custom and fashion, on the occasion, was, by his direction, given to the poor.”

“The year after Dr. Edwards was settled at New Haven, he was married to Miss Mary Porter, daughter of the Hon. Eleazar and Mrs. Sarah Porter, of Hadley, Mass. She was a lady every way worthy of his highest confidence and friendship, and of his warmest affection. By her he had four children, three of whom survived him, and two of whom are still living. (Mrs. Hoyt, of New Haven, and Mrs. Chapin, wife of Rev. Dr. Chapin, of Rocky Hill, Ct.) Mrs. Edwards was drowned in June, 1782. She was out with her husband in a chaise, several miles from home, when he left her to give direction to some laborers in his employ, at a little distance; she riding forward alone, and intending on her return to call for him. But on coming back, she allowed the horse to drink at a watering place by the road side, on the margin of a small river; and he pressing forward into the deep water, drew the chaise suddenly down a steep precipice. (The place is in what is now called Whitneyville, on the Hamden road, just above the Whitneyville bridge.) Mrs. Edwards was thrown out of the carriage, and remained under water more than an hour, before she was discovered. Every effort was made to resuscitate her, but without success. She was universally beloved in life, and lamented in death by all her acquaintance. The second wife of Dr. Edwards, was Miss Mercy Sabin, daughter of Mr. Hezekiah and Mrs. Mercy Sabin, of New Haven. He was married to her December 18, 1783, and she survived him quite a number of years.” Memoir of Dr. E.

acter was marked by humility, simplicity, and great conscientiousness and firmness. His piety, though he was not stoical, was manifested more in steadfast *principle* than in *emotion*. His sympathies for the afflicted and suffering, however, were strong. He took an especial interest in the abused African race. His sermon on the injustice and impolicy of the slave trade and of slavery, would be called by many, in these days, not only abolitionism, but incendiaryism.\* As a *student*, he was very diligent; usually rising at four o'clock to commence his studies, and improving every moment in study, that was not required for some necessary relaxation or business.†

\* "But after all," says he, in this sermon, which was delivered in 1791, and published by request, "this whole objection, (viz. it is not safe to manumit the negroes; they would cut our throats; they would endanger the peace and government of the state,) if it were ever so entirely founded on truth; if the freed negroes would probably rise against their masters or combine against government, rests on the same ground as the apology of the robber, who murders the man he has robbed. Says the robber to himself, 'I have robbed this man, and now if I let him go he will kill me, or he will complain to authority, and I shall be apprehended and hung: I must therefore kill him. There is no other way of safety for me.' The coincidence of this reasoning, and that of the objection under consideration, must be manifest to all. And if this reasoning of the robber be inconclusive; if the robber have no right on that ground to kill the man whom he hath robbed; neither have the slaveholders any more right to continue to hold their slaves. If the robber ought to spare the life of the man robbed, take his own chance, and esteem himself happy if he can escape justice; so the slaveholders ought immediately to let their slaves go free, treat them with the utmost kindness, by such treatment endeavor to pacify them with respect to past injuries, and esteem themselves happy if they can compromise the matter in this manner."—Works of Pres. Edwards the younger, Vol. II, p. 96.

† Dr. Edwards was, throughout his life, an accurate and thorough classical scholar. Judge Baldwin informs me, that when he was a tutor

His sermons were plain, direct, often remarkably pointed, and usually upon doctrinal subjects. Most of them were extemporaneous, their outline only being committed

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in Yale College, the Faculty, as their number was small, used to request the assistance, at their semi-annual examinations, of Dr. Edwards; which, from his friendship for literature and the college, he was very willing to afford. In these examinations he was quite thorough and strict; often interposing his "*haud recte*" (not correct). The students on one occasion, not liking as the college phrase goes, "*to be screwed*," expressed their dissatisfaction with the Dr.'s mode of examination, by "*scraping*." "Very well," says he, "young gentlemen, you may take your course, I shall pursue mine;" and screwed them tighter and tighter, till they concluded that their wisest course was, to be still. They gave him, however, the name of "*Old haud recte*," by which he afterwards went among the students.

The following anecdote, told me by one of our aged men, illustrates a trait in the character of Dr. Edwards. President Washington, when passing through this part of the country, spent a Sabbath in New Haven. Appointment was made by or for him, to attend the Episcopal church in the forenoon, and the White Haven church in the afternoon. Some of Dr. Edwards' people who were desirous (as often happens in similar cases) that their minister should do credit to himself and them, by preaching what is flippantly called "*a crack sermon*," took care that he should know of the appointment. In the afternoon a great multitude followed Washington to the White Haven church. When Dr. Edwards rose to deliver his discourse, much to the disappointment of those who were desirous of a specially great sermon, he gave out this text, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," and observed—"In speaking from these words I shall direct my remarks principally to the children in the galleries." He had designed that discourse for that afternoon, and doubtless thought that the services of the sanctuary of the King of kings should not be changed on account of the entrance of an earthly magistrate. Probably Washington respected him much more than he did the minister in Rhode Island, who in similar circumstances preached a sermon, the object of which was to compare Washington as the deliverer of his country, with Christ as the Redeemer of the world.

to paper. But so clear was his mind, so full of thought; profound, well defined, digested, and arranged, that he would discuss without hesitation or mistake, and with masterly logic, subjects the most intricate and abstruse. His delivery was rather rapid, yet clear and distinct. He addressed himself more to the understanding and conscience, than to the feelings. He had too little imagination, he was too argumentative and philosophical, or metaphysical, and dwelt too largely on controverted points, especially the controverted points of Calvinism, to be eminently popular, or very interesting to the larger part of a congregation. As a preacher of *profoundly theological sermons*, he was almost unrivalled ; and on occasions of ordination, when such sermons are often expected, no man, probably, of his day, was more frequently sought.

As a *theologian*, he stood in the very first rank. He was patient, vigorous, and independent in investigation. He was remarkable for great penetration and clearness, for accurate discrimination and great comprehension. He was profoundly skilled in the *philosophy of the mind*; and in reasoning, he defined accurately his terms and his positions ; assumed premises which were always clear, and generally self-evident, and marched to his conclusions by a *logic* that was irresistible. In sentiment, he was, in general, a *Calvinist*, in particular, a "*Hopkinsian*;" indeed, the *founder* of the Hopkinsian school, more, perhaps, than Hopkins himself. He made very decided *improvements* on Calvinism ; and ranked himself among the New Divinity men, rather than among the Calvinists.\* He was, so far

\* Dr. Stiles says :—" Rev. Mr. Edwards of New Haven, tells me that there are three *parties in Connecticut*, all pleased with my elevation to the presidency of Yale College ; (this was in 1777:) viz. Ar-

as I can learn, the first to state and defend those more rational and philosophical, as well as more scriptural views of the *Atonement*, which are now generally adopted through New England, and by a large part of the Presbyterian church in the United States. He strenuously insisted on man's complete natural ability to obey the law of God, as a necessary ground of his obligation to such obedience; and on this ground, pressed upon sinners the duty of immediately commencing that obedience, by turning to God. Some of his philosophical and theological views are, doubtless, *extreme*, and have been, and will yet be, improved by others, as those of his predecessors were by him. Still, theology, as a science, is indebted to him for great advances. He superintended, while in Connecticut, the theological studies of a number of young men, some of whom were afterward highly distinguished; and thus, more, perhaps, than by his preaching and writing, contributed to mould the theology of Connecticut and New England.\*

Dr. Edwards has often been compared with his father, President Edwards. (I call the one Dr. and the other President, to distinguish them from each other, though they were both presidents.) "It is seldom that a son has such a father, and it is still more rare that such a father leaves behind him a son so worthy of his lineage."†

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*minians*, who he said were a small party; the *New-Divinity Gentlemen*, of whom he said he was called one, who were larger, he said, but still small; and the main body of the ministers, which he said were *Calvinistic*.

\* Dr. Edwards's works have recently been published in two large octavo volumes, together with a sketch of his life, by his grandson, Rev. Tryon Edwards, of Rochester, for which labor the theological world owe him many thanks. To that sketch I am chiefly indebted for the facts which I have stated in this brief notice.

† Chris. Spec. for Jan. 1823.

They were alike in the structure of their minds, and in the mode of their intellectual operations. There was also a striking similarity in the actions and events of their lives. "The name, education, and early employments of both were alike. Both were pious in their youth; were distinguished scholars; and were tutors for equal periods in the colleges where they were respectively educated. Both were settled in the ministry as successors to their maternal grandfathers; both were once dismissed, and again settled in retired places, where they had leisure to study, and prepare and publish their works. Both were removed from these stations, to become presidents of colleges; and both died shortly after their respective inaugurations, the one in the fifty-sixth, the other in the fifty-seventh year of his age; each having preached on the first Sabbath of the year of his death, on the text, 'This year thou shalt die.'"<sup>\*</sup>

As a *preacher*, the son was undoubtedly inferior to the father. He had little of that powerful imagination, which, united with strong feelings and vigorous intellect, made his father one of the most impressive and effective preachers that ever spoke the words of life to dying men.

As a *theologian*, however, he was, so far as I am capable of judging, fully equal to his father, if not superior. He made some decided improvements on his father's theology; as he ought, standing on his father's shoulders. He was, in discussion, more clear, both in thought and style, and equally acute and logical. Dr. Emmons was accustomed to say, that "the senior President had more *reason* than his son; but the son was a better *reasoner* than his father;"<sup>†</sup> and this, perhaps, is near the truth. I have

\* Memoir of Dr. Edwards.

† Emmons' Works, Vol. I, p. 135, of Memoir.

dwell long, considering the limits of these discourses, on the character of Dr. Edwards, because, by this generation, he is not known; nor, indeed, is he known by the generation that is passing off the stage, *by his written works*, as he must be, in order to be appreciated.

We must now go back, from the year 1796, to the other branch, the Fair Haven church, which we left just formed, in the year 1771.

From the time of their secession, in September, 1769, till February, 1773, they had no settled minister. Their pulpit was supplied, chiefly, by Mr. Bird, their former pastor, who, with his family, worshiped with them.

On the 3d of February, 1773, Mr. Allyn Mather was ordained as their minister. Mr. Mather was born in Windsor, in this state, in the year 1747. He graduated at Yale College, in 1771, in the same class with Henry Daggett, afterward one of the leading men in that church.

As Mr. Mather left no published works, and no written notice of his character is to be found, and as the records both of that church and society are very imperfect, I am dependent for my knowledge of him entirely on the recollections of those few surviving contemporaries of his who knew him. He was feeble in health, having had an affection of the lungs and a cough from his first settlement. He was devotedly *pious*, desiring to be spent for the honor of God and the spiritual good of his people. They would often come to him on the Sabbath, I am told, and, on account of his apparent feebleness, urge him not to preach. But he usually denied their solicitations, saying, that he wished to proclaim the riches of Christ, and preferred to die in his pulpit. He had few of the graces of oratory, and did not excel in profound investigation, or doctrinal discussion. But he

was plain and practical in his choice of subjects and in his mode of treating them; earnest, affectionate, tender, and winning in his manner; and pathetic, touching, and persuasive in his appeals. He excelled in pastoral labor, so far as he was able to perform it, and was exceedingly beloved by his people. About eight years after his ordination, he was obliged by the disease of his lungs, to suspend his labors. He went to a southern clime and spent the winter, and came back much improved in health. But the hopes of his friends were raised only to be disappointed. In about a year he was prostrated again. He went to Savannah to spend the winter; and there died on the 12th of November, 1784, at the age of thirty seven. His memory is still fragrant among the few survivors who knew him. His ministry of eleven years was uncommonly successful for those times. During that ministry he admitted seventy to the church.\*

For three years the church was without a pastor—till November 9th, 1786, when Mr. Samuel Austin was ordained its minister.

\* I find in Dr. Stiles' Lit. Diary, the following note.—“Dec. 12, Lord's Day, P. M. I preached at Rev. Mr. Mather's meeting, a funeral sermon (Philippians, i, 21—For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain) on the Rev. Allyn Mather, the deceased pastor of that flock, who died in Savannah, Georgia, Nov. 12.” Of this sermon I can find no trace. Probably it was not printed. There is a discrepancy between this notice of Mr. Mather, by Dr. Stiles, and that in the commencement of our church catalogue. The latter says that he died on the *fourth* of November, and Dr. Stiles that he died on the *twelfth* of November. Dr. S.'s notice is probably correct.

Mr. Mather married Miss Sophia Barnard of Hartford. He left several children, one of whom is still living in this city. Mrs. Mather afterwards married Mr. Ebenezer Townsend, the father of the late Mrs. Hezekiah Howe, of this place.

Mr. Austin was born in New Haven on the 7th of October, 1760—the son of Samuel and Lydia Austin, and brother of the late William Austin, deacon of this church. He was graduated at Yale College, with the highest honors of his class, in 1783, being then twenty three years of age.\* He experienced the renewing grace of God a short time before entering college, and during the first year of his academical course was admitted a member of the college church. He studied theology with Dr. Edwards ; was licensed to preach in October, 1784, by the Association of New London county ; and preached with great popularity in Norwich and several places in the eastern part of the state. In the autumn of 1785, he received a unanimous invitation to settle in the Middle Dutch church in New York city, as colleague with the late Dr. Livingston. This invitation, though accompanied with most liberal proposals, he declined, because the church practiced, and were disposed to adhere to, the

\* His class consisted of forty two members. Among them were Hon. David Daggett, LL. D., Abiel Holmes, D. D., LL. D., Jedidiah Morse, D. D., and Hon. John Cotton Smith, LL. D. Of this class, thirteen, a larger proportion than usual at that time, became ministers of the gospel.

The following is the testimonial of one of his distinguished classmates, Hon. David Daggett of New Haven. "He was an assiduous and thorough scholar. Attentive to all the prescribed duties of college, sober and discreet, he sustained an unblemished character. An excellent linguist, he was a *Dean* scholar. Regarded always as a very good speaker, he received as the reward of merit, the first appointment in the exercises of the commencement, when he was graduated. His maturity of years, with unremitting attention to his studies, gave him a rank, to say the least, among the first scholars of his class."

Judge Daggett was a member of Mr. Austin's congregation, when he was settled over the Fair Haven society.

half-way covenant, under which he could not consent to become their pastor.

In the following autumn, he received and accepted a unanimous invitation to settle in the Fair Haven church in this city, and was ordained on the 9th of November, 1786. The sermon on the occasion was preached by Dr. Edwards. This is the first act of communion, so far as I can learn, between the church of White Haven, and its seceding daughter, the church in Fair Haven. The reason of this change is obvious. Mr. Austin, the pastor elect, was a favorite pupil of Dr. Edwards, and fully adopted his sentiments, both as to the half-way covenant and the New Divinity.

Mr. Austin remained the pastor of that church about three years. Soon after his settlement, a considerable part of the society living in the northern district of the town, drew off and formed the church in East Plains, (now called Hamden East Plains, or Whitneyville.)\* This secession greatly weakened the society. There was also some dissatisfaction with Mr. Austin on account of the half-way covenant, (that fruitful source of difficulty,) to which he refused to conform, and against which he earnestly contended.† For these reasons he requested a dismission, having received a call from the first so-

\* In the beginning of the first discourse, I spoke of this church as a mother of churches. Besides the church in East Plains, the church in the eastern part of the town, (now the village of Fair Haven,) the church in Westville, and the church in Howe street, were formed principally from this church.

† When Mr. Austin was settled, he made a sort of compromise with those in the society who were in favor of the half-way covenant, which at that time was often made in similar circumstances. He consented that those who had already owned the half-way covenant, might con-

society in Worcester, Mass., and was accordingly dismissed by an ecclesiastical council on the 19th of January, 1790.\*

On the 29th of September of the same year, he was installed at Worcester, where he continued for twenty five years, having great influence, not only in that large town, but throughout the central part of Massachusetts, and indeed throughout the whole state. No minister at that time, in that commonwealth, was considered abler than he. And none did more than he to restore the churches from that lamentable worldliness and defection, into which they had gradually declined under the influence of the half-way covenant; and none was an abler champion than he, against the great heresy of Unitarianism, which, during that period, rolled its pernicious waves over that ancient commonwealth.

In 1815, Dr. Austin† was called from his important station at Worcester to the presidency of the University of Vermont. He remained there but six years. He felt that out of the ministry he was out of his element, and he panted again to share its labors and enjoyments. He resigned the presidency of that institution in 1821. Prompted by his benevolence, he took charge of a feeble congregation in Newport, where he remained four years, and then returned to Worcester. There he was soon attacked by a disease, which, together with severe pecu-

tinue to have their children baptized; not by himself, but by some minister who had no conscientious scruples against the practice, with whom he would exchange, to afford an opportunity for the performance of the rite.

\* The house now occupied by Prof. Goodrich was built by Dr. Austin.

† He received the degree of doctor of divinity from Williams College in 1807.

niary difficulties, and a hereditary predisposition to derangement, threw him into an incurable religious melancholy, that continued, with slight lucid intervals, till his death ; which occurred at the house of his nephew, Rev. Samuel H. Riddel, of Glastenbury, Conn., on the 4th of December, 1830, in the seventy first year of his age. The morning of his death he appeared rather more unwell than usual, but was able to be below with the family. Seeming unconscious of the presence of any one, he uttered aloud the fervent ejaculation, "*Blessed Jesus ! blessed Jesus ! sanctify me wholly !*" He then lay down on the sofa, and sunk into an apoplectic and fatal sleep. He fell asleep in a mysterious night of despair. He woke, with sweet surprise, in the glorious morning of paradise, in the presence of the Savior whose grace he had just implored.

As a *Christian*, Dr. Austin was conscientious, ardent, and eminently spiritual. As a *preacher*, he greatly excelled. A vivid conception, comprehensive intellect, rapid association of ideas, quickly kindling feelings, and great command of language, made him powerful in the pulpit, especially when he spoke extemporaneously.\* He was peculiarly felicitous in prayer. An old parishioner of his, of whom I made inquiry at Worcester, told me, that he never heard a man pray who was so free, appropriate,

\* Says Dr. Tenney, in a sermon delivered at the funeral of Dr. Austin : " As a preacher, he must be ranked among the most able, eloquent, and popular, of American divines. His manner in the pulpit was solemn, dignified, and commanding. The tones of his voice were full and flexible, and his enunciation free and emphatic. In the delivery of his sermons, he was always animated, often vehement, and occasionally rose to strains of the most sublime and impassioned eloquence."

and eloquent, as Dr. Austin, and who so *towered* (as he expressed it) toward the mercy-seat.

As a *theologian*, he was distinguished, having a comprehensive, independent, clear, philosophical, and logical mind. He was in sentiment of the Hopkinsian school of Calvinists, partaking of course of the theological extremes, as well as the greater theological improvements of the New Divinity of those times.\*

For six years after Mr. Austin's dismission, the Fair Haven church was without a pastor; and in five months

\* Dr. Austin's published writings are as follows:—"A View of the Church;" "Letters on Baptism," examining Merrill's Seven Sermons, 1805: "Reply to Merrill's Twelve Letters," 1806:—The following sermons: On Disinterested Love, 1790: A funeral sermon on the death of a Mr. Smith and a Miss Smith of Exeter, N. H., 1790: On the death of Miss Hannah Blair, 1794: A Thanksgiving Sermon, 1797: At the ordination of Rev. Samuel Worcester, 1798: Of Rev. Leonard Worcester, 1800: Before the Massachusetts Missionary Society, 1803: Dedication of the meeting-house at Hadley, 1808: Ordination of Rev. Warren Fay, and of Rev. J. M. Whiton, 1808: A Fast sermon, 1811: Two Fast sermons, 1812: Dedication of the meeting-house at Worcester, 1823: Address at Worcester on the Religious Celebration of the Fourth of July, 1825, and numerous contributions to the periodicals of his time. But the most important of his works was published in 1826, and is entitled "Austin's Dissertations on several Fundamental Articles of Christian Theology." It consists of four dissertations, one on God's Ultimate end in Creation, one on the Divine Moral Government, one on the First Apostacy and its consequences, and one on the Atonement—to which is added a sermon on Justification by Faith. This is as able a work on these important subjects as I am acquainted with.

Another valuable service which Dr. Austin rendered to the American churches, was that of collecting and publishing at Worcester in 1808, in a standard edition, the works of President Edwards.

For a more full account of the life of Dr. Austin, see a Memoir of Rev. Samuel Austin, D. D., by Rev. Samuel H. Riddel, of Glasten-

after Dr. Edwards' dismission, was united with the White Haven church, under the denomination of "the Church of Christ in the United Societies of White Haven and Fair Haven." Thus, on the 27th of November, 1796, a union took place between those, who in 1769 were divided. The two *societies* had been incorporated into one by the Assembly, in the previous October.\* As there were two houses of public worship, it was agreed

bury, Ct., published in the American Quarterly Register for February, 1837. To this memoir I am chiefly indebted for the materials of this brief sketch.

Dr. Austin married on the 14th of Sept. 1788, Miss Jerusha Hopkins, daughter of Rev. Dr. Samuel Hopkins, of Hadley, Mass. Mrs. Austin survived her husband several years. They had no children.

The family into which Dr. A. married, was quite remarkable as a *clerical* family. Dr. Hopkins, (who was graduated at Yale College, in 1749, and died in 1811, after a ministry of fifty six years in Hadley,) married the widow of his predecessor, Rev. Chester Williams, with five small children; whom, with nine of his own, he educated with happy success for God and the church. Rev. Nehemiah Williams, late of Brimfield, Mass., was one of the number. Rev. Samuel Austin, D. D.; Rev. Nathaniel Emmons, D. D. of Franklin; Rev. Samuel Spring, D. D. of Newburyport; Rev. Leonard Worcester, of Peacham, Vt., and Rev. William Riddel, formerly of Bristol, Me., took their wives from this family.

\* For the action of the two churches and the two societies respecting union, and for the Act of the Legislature of the state, by which the societies were incorporated into one, by the name of "*The United Societies of White Haven and Fair Haven*," see Records of Church and of Society for 1796.

In 1815, the members of the United Societies, finding inconveniences in the length of their corporate name, and that by length of time and a more intimate union, and more especially by uniting in the erection of a meeting house, it was rendered unnecessary to retain longer the names of the ancient societies, petitioned the Legislature to change their name to that of "*The United Society*"—which petition was grant-

to occupy each, on alternate months; which was done till near the time, when the house in which we are now assembled was finished, which was in November, 1815.\*

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ed. This is now the *corporate* or *legal* name; and, strictly speaking, the name of the church is, *The Church in the United Society*; but the name in most common use is *The North Church*. For the Act of Legislature referred to, see Records of Society, 1815.

\* In 1807, many complaints were made of the inconvenience of using the two houses—the owners of seats in one finding it difficult to be pleasantly seated in the other. With a view to remedy this inconvenience, and to raise a fund by the sale of one of them, the houses were released by the societies of White Haven and Fair Haven to the “United Societies of White Haven and Fair Haven.” In 1810, nothing effectual having been done, and the discontent increasing, it was proposed to build a new house. But many of the pew owners made such strong opposition, that the project was suffered to rest. In January, 1812, the subject of building was revived, and the society voted in substance, that any individuals of the society might build a new house of such materials and dimensions as they pleased, on or near the spot where the Fair Haven meeting house stood, reserving one fourth of the house for the society, and receiving from the society the two old houses, and the lot on which the White Haven house stood. The First Society, having taken down their house to build a new one, applied, in December of this year, for permission to use one of the houses of the United Societies of White Haven and Fair Haven. The use of the Fair Haven meeting house was granted them. When that house was taken down, the two societies used the same house; the United Society going in at 9 and 1 o'clock, and the First Society at 11 and 3.

In the month of December, 1812, twenty members offered terms for building a new house, which were accepted. The terms were in substance as follows:—The proposers, at their own expense, to build for the society a new brick meeting house, at or near the place where the Fair Haven house stood, (said place to be established according to law,) and of such dimensions and structure as they, and a special committee of the society for that and other purposes, should agree upon; that not less than one eighth part of the house when completed should be

In November, 1798, just two years after the union, Rev. John Gemmil of Great Valley in the state of Pennsylvania, was installed pastor of the church and society.

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reserved for the society, the location of said eighth part to be determined by the proposers and said special committee ; that the society should bind themselves to occupy said meeting house, when built, for public worship on the Sabbath. That the two old meeting houses, together with the White Haven lot of land, should be at the disposal of the proposers, it being understood that the White Haven house should remain for the accommodation of the society till the new one should be completed. That all the new meeting house, except the aforesaid eighth part, should be disposed of under the direction of the proposers and said special committee, or so much thereof as to reimburse the proposers (provided there should be sufficient) for all advances made for building the meeting house, with the interest thereon, together with reasonable compensation to the person or persons appointed to superintend the building ; and if any property or balance should remain, it should belong to the society ; and that, if the society should not choose to receive an eighth part of the pews as a compensation for their old houses and lot of land, the proposers should give the society for them \$2500 in pews, the value and location of which to be determined as aforesaid. The persons who made this liberal proposal were Thomas Punderson, Increase Cooke, Hervey Mulford, Timothy Dwight, Jun., Jared Bradley, James Henry, Abel Burritt, Jun., William Stanley, Leeman Dunning, William H. Elliott, Hezekiah Howe, Ebenezer Johnson, Jun., William Dougal, Reuben Rice, Nathan Peck, Eleazar Foster, Charles Sherman, Samuel Punderson, Eli Hotchkiss, Luther Bradley.

Immediately after the proposals were accepted, the contractors employed Mr. David Hoadley as builder, who immediately commenced building. It was now in the midst of the war with Great Britain, and the lumber for building having been purchased at Middletown, application was made to Commodore Hardy, then blockading New London, for a permit for the safe transport of the lumber to New Haven by way of Connecticut River, which was immediately granted. The house was finished and accepted by the society, November 29, 1815, two of the twenty contractors, during the time of building, having been re-

In the summer of 1795, Mr. Gemmil came on to Connecticut, as a delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, to the General Association of this state. After hearing him preach twice, the White Haven church and society, in August, invited him to settle over them, which invitation he declined. During the next month, he was elected Professor of Divinity in Yale College, and declined the office. Three years afterward, when the White Haven and Fair Haven churches and societies were united, he received a second call, which he accepted. He remained three years, and was dismissed, at his own request, and to the great satisfaction of the society, in November, 1801. Of his subsequent history, I have been able only to learn, that he resided in the state of Pennsylvania, where he entered with zeal into political life, for which indeed he showed great partiality during his ministry, and for which, from all I can learn, he was better fitted than for the sacred office. He deceased some years since. He was a man of brilliant talents, and a popular speaker.\*

After an interval of four years, the church and society called Mr. Samuel Merwin to be their pastor. He was

moved to worship God, as was hoped, in a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The whole expense of the house, including chandeliers, was \$32,724 58. The sale of the pews produced, after reserving one eighth of the property for the society, \$5,491 97 over and above the cost of the house. This sum was funded for the support of the gospel ministry in the society.

The house was planned entirely by Mr. Ebenezer Johnson, (now a member of this church and society,) and is, especially its interior, honorable proof of his genius and taste in architecture.

\* I find on the society's records the following vote:—May 12, 1798.  
“That in case Mr. Gemmil should settle in this society as their minis-

ordained on the 13th of February, 1805.\* He was dismissed at his own request, and with ample testimonials of his fidelity and success from the church and society, on the 29th of December, 1831, after a ministry of twenty six years.† He now resides in this city, holding pleasant intercourse with and performing many acceptable services for the people, for whom he so long labored, and whom he still ardently loves.

The ministry of Mr. Merwin, was peculiarly blessed by the Great Head of the church. Two years after his settlement, in 1807-8, there was an interesting revival of religion in this city, which had not been thus visited for nearly seventy years. There was another in 1815-16, another in 1820-21, another in 1827-8, and another in

ter, it shall be in his discretion to exchange with *Dr. Dana*, Dr. Dwight, or any of the neighboring ministers, at such times as he may think proper, and as he may find for the spiritual interest of this society.

This is the first notice of any disposition on the part of this church to have fellowship with Dr. Dana. Indeed the two churches never, till this vote, had public fellowship of any kind with each other, except for a few years before the death of Mr. Whittelsey, the predecessor of Dr. Dana, when the monthly sacramental lectures were united, and were preached at the three houses of worship in rotation. Immediately after the installation of Dr. Dana, on account of the laxity and unsoundness of doctrine imputed to him, the White Haven and Fair Haven churches refused to hold communion with him. From the time of the above vote, the harmony and coöperation of the churches have been continually increasing.

\* Mr. Merwin was settled upon a salary of \$700. In December, 1809, his salary was raised to \$800; in December, 1813, to \$850, and in November, 1815, to \$1000.

† As a testimony of the affection and esteem universally entertained for Mr. Merwin by the church and society, the sum of \$2000, one half raised by voluntary subscription, was voted to him.

1831. As a result, chiefly of these five revivals, over eight hundred were added to this church.\*

For four years again the church and society were destitute of a minister.† The vacancy was supplied by the installation of Rev. Leicester A. Sawyer of Martinsburgh, N. Y., which occurred on the 2d of June, 1835. Mr. Sawyer's ministry continued till November 20th, 1837, when he was dismissed at his own request.

During his ministry, the church was favored with a revival, which resulted in the addition of sixty members to the church.‡

The present pastor was ordained on the 26th of June, 1838. The fourth year of his ministry has nearly expired.

\* In 1824, the society lost by the failure of the Eagle Bank in this city, a large part of its fund, \$7,200. The fund, previous to the failure, was a little over \$10,000. The tax for many years before that time had been but  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents on the dollar. It was then raised to 5 per cent. This circumstance had a very sensible effect on the prosperity of the society.

Since 1833, the expenses of the society have been paid by an assessment on slips and pews and individual members of the congregation; such an assessment as the persons on whom it is laid voluntarily assent to.

† During this period the church and society were desirous of the blessing of stated pastor, and made several attempts to secure it. In July, 1833, they called Mr. Leverett Griggs, (now Rev. L. Griggs, of North Haven.) In October, 1833, they called Rev. John H. Adams, of Syracuse, N. Y. In March, 1834, they called Mr. Oliver Ellsworth Daggett, (now Rev. O. E. Daggett, of Hartford;) and in June, 1834, they called Rev. Thomas H. Skinner, D. D., then Professor in the Theological Seminary at Andover.

‡ Mr. Sawyer was afterwards installed over the Park street (now Howe street) church in this city—a new church, formed partly by peaceable secession from the North church. He remained over that church about two years, when he was dismissed at his own request, and went to the state of Ohio. He is now President of Central College in that state.

During these years, the church has been twice refreshed from the presence of the Lord; for which undeserved mercy, we should be unfeignedly grateful. One hundred and twenty nine have been added to the church by profession, and eighty four by letter.\*

I have cause for profound gratitude, that, while laboring in the weakness and inexperience of youth, I have experienced the forbearance, and enjoyed the sympathy and kindness of an affectionate and united people; and I ask a continued interest in their prayers, that my future duties and responsibilities may be discharged and sustained, in the imparted strength of the Lord, and with his abundant blessing.

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\* The present pastor was settled on a salary of \$1000, which during the next year was raised to \$1250.

## S E R M O N III.

### PROGRESS DURING THE CENTURY, AS EVINCED IN THE PRECEDING HISTORY.

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ISAIAH, ii, 2.—And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it.

ISAIAH, xi, 6.—The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them.

SUCH pictures the Holy Scriptures frequently give us of a future period of universal righteousness, and peace, and joy on earth. They are most delightful to the Christian. To them he often turns his eye, while studying this world's history, and his first inquiry, after tracing any portion of that history, is,

*What progress has therein been made toward this blessed and glorious consummation?* In concluding the ecclesiastical history of this people, during the century which has just closed, I should do violence to my feelings, and be negligent of my duty, did I not endeavor to answer the inquiry,

What progress toward this consummation, is manifest in **THIS HISTORY** ?

You will observe, that the inquiry before us, is not the unlimited one, what progress toward the future triumphs of philanthropy and religion, is manifest in the history of the *world*, or of *New England*, or of this *community*, during

the last century? but the *limited* one, what progress toward such a result, is manifest in the history of *this church*, during the last century? So connected, however, is the history of this church with the ecclesiastical and moral history of New England, and so eventful has been that history during the last century, that I fear I shall find this limited inquiry too broad for a single discourse. I will endeavor, however, to answer it, with as much brevity as the nature of the case will permit. I observe then,

I. That the history of this church during the last century, manifests great progress in *religious liberty*. We have seen that this church, in its early years, had to struggle under a load of civil and ecclesiastical oppression.

In the early part of the last century, religion was embarrassed by its connexion with the civil power—by the union of church and state. Now it is wholly unrestrained by the civil power; and the church, in its various denominations, though protected by, is entirely dissevered from, the state. Then, too, the *ecclesiastical* government of the Congregational churches, seriously impaired their liberty. Now, these churches have a form of government, which leaves each entirely free and independent. It may be well on these points to be more particular.

The rigor of the union between church and state in Connecticut, had been somewhat abated previously to 1742. In 1708 was passed, by the General Assembly of the state, the *Act of Toleration*, as it was called, by which all persons, who soberly dissented from the worship and ministry by law established, were permitted to enjoy the same liberty of conscience with the dissenters in England, under the act of William and Mary, i. e. they were exempt from punishment, for not conforming to the established religion, though not exempt from taxation, for its

support.\* All the people in the state, whether dissenters or not, were bound, by law, to contribute to the support of the churches, which accorded in doctrine and government with the rules of the Saybrook Platform—the ecclesiastical constitution of the state. In 1727, Episcopalians, and in 1729, Quakers and Baptists, were exempted from taxation by the established churches, provided they attended on the worship of God in a tolerated society of their own denomination. So that, after 1729, all could worship God according to the dictates of their consciences, free from penalties, and free from taxation for the support of the established churches, *except Congregationalists and Presbyterians.* They, though permitted by the Act of Toleration, to secede and worship by themselves, were not exempt from *taxation* for the support of the churches and ministers from whom they seceded. The members of this church and their adherents, as we have seen, in addition to their contributions for the support of their own religious worship, were, for the first seventeen years, taxed for the support of the church they had left.

At the time of the Great Awakening, the rigor of the laws against the religious freedom of Congregationalists and Presbyterians, was temporarily increased. In 1743, the year after this church was formed, the law was made more rigorous against seceding Congregationalists and Presbyterians. The Assembly, to suppress enthusiasm, as they said, repealed the Act of Toleration, so that, thereafter, none could secede from the established churches, and worship by themselves, without punishment, unless they should ask and obtain *special permission from the legislature;* which special permission, it was intimated, *Congregationalists and Presbyterians* should not have.

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\* See note to p. 30.

In 1742, the law was passed, to which I have referred,\* forbidding any minister, by specified penalties, to preach within the limits of another minister's parish, or any unlicensed person to exhort in any parish, without the consent of the minister and the major part of that parish.

But in the course of a few years, the legislature changed its course, and freely formed applicants, of whatever denomination, into ecclesiastical societies; and thus gave them liberty to worship by themselves, free from penalties, and free from taxation by their former societies.

In the revision of the laws in 1784, after the American Revolution, a great improvement was made in the law relating to ecclesiastical affairs. The legal establishment of the Congregational churches assenting to the Saybrook Platform was omitted, and liberty granted to all persons to worship according to their own conscience or inclination, and in such societies as they should choose to join or to form; such societies being, to all intents and purposes, legal corporations. All, however, though they had their choice of societies, were taxed for the support of religion in some society. This provision began, ere long, to be complained of, as unjust to those who did not wish to maintain *any* religious worship, or, if they did, not by taxation; and was, moreover, found to be inexpedient, as giving a virtual support to the laxest form of religion;† and in 1818, when the new constitution was formed, it was repealed, and

\* See p. 44.

† They, who would support no form of religion unless compelled by law, if compelled by law, will support that kind of religion which is least troublesome to conscience and the depraved heart. This has been more fully illustrated in Massachusetts than in Connecticut. The repeal of the law in that commonwealth, for the compulsory support of religion, has proved a severe blow to Unitarianism.

religion was left entirely to voluntary support—a support which experience has proved to be altogether the best.

Our *ecclesiastical government* also, though much the same in *form*, is much more free in *fact*, than during the early years of this church. I have in a former discourse, spoken of two constructions, the Presbyterian and Congregational, of the Saybrook Articles of Discipline,\* and had occasion to show that the former, while the churches were in their long sleep, had become the established construction—a construction, which placed the churches under the jurisdiction of a *judicial* tribunal, virtually beyond their control, and thus took away their Congregational liberty. Moreover, the ruling party in the ministry not only enforced this construction of the Saybrook Articles upon those churches which had adopted them, but also insisted that no new church should be constituted, *except by agreement to those Articles.*† But in the course of fifty years, as one church after another, and each party in its turn, was made to feel the application of the iron construction, that construction was generally rejected, and the Congregational one adopted. So that now, those churches which have, and those

\* See p. 36.

† The effort to enforce the universal reception of the Saybrook Platform, seems to have been vigorous and determined. For instance, a new church was formed at Salisbury, on the *Cambridge* Platform, (i. e. not consociated,) and the Rev. John Lee was ordained its pastor in 1744. The Association of New Haven county reprimanded the church for adopting that Platform, and suspended Messrs. Humphreys of Derby, Leavenworth of Waterbury, and Todd of Northbury, from the ministry, for assisting in the ordination. Humphreys was at one time expelled from the Association, for preaching to a Baptist church. See Trumbull.

which have not, adopted the Saybrook Articles, (in other words, become consociated,) are equally free. The first members of this church, having suffered under the Saybrook yoke, were strongly opposed to it, and adopted as the first article in their rules, "*This church is free and independent.*" Their hostility to that yoke was transmitted to their descendants, and still exists among us, notwithstanding the yoke has become easy. I trust that from age to age, they who here profess the name of Christ, will remember that this is a *Congregational* church, and guard its Congregational liberty with a holy vigilance. I observe,

II. It is manifest from the survey which we have taken, that the *churches have made great progress in purity.*

I have had occasion to show, that in the early part of the eighteenth century, the results of a gradual and long declension in piety, were widely and lamentably manifest; that religion had greatly degenerated into formalism; that owing *proximately* to the half-way covenant, and to the doctrine that the Lord's supper was a converting ordinance, and *ultimately* to the early practice in this colony and in Massachusetts, of making church membership a qualification for the enjoyment of civil privileges, to false notions as to man's competence and obligation to repent, and to a leaven of reliance upon ceremonies and ordinances which survived the Reformation to be purged out by the wondrous displays of God's grace in the middle and latter parts of the eighteenth century—owing to these causes, proximate and ultimate, great numbers had been admitted, some to full, and some to partial, standing in the churches, who confessedly *had no piety*. Thus the church had become secularized, and full of unworthy members. Thus the deep and broad

distinction between external morality and vital godliness, was in a great measure obliterated.

To reform the churches from this corruption, the great revival of 1740 was ordered, and exactly fitted, by the Divine wisdom. The *great idea*, which characterized that revival, which, so far as truth is concerned, was the grand element of power working in it, was the idea of *the new birth*, or a radical change in moral character by conversion from the world to God, from sin to holiness, as *an ascertainable change*—a change *evinced* with more or less of clearness in the consciousness and conduct of its subject. This doctrine of conversion as a *self-evinced change*, was no where prevalent previous to that revival. It was proclaimed as fundamentally important, and with great power, by the promoters of that revival. It was then, as it must ever be, eminently the sword of the Spirit. It was, of course, embraced by the subjects of the revival. It dictated that mode of addressing the hearers of the gospel, now universal in evangelical churches, viz. addressing them as *either penitent or impenitent, for God or against him*, and as those who may *ascertain* whether they be for God or against him. It led moreover, by irresistible inference, to the position that none ought to be admitted, either to partial or full standing in the church of Christ, except on evidence that they had been born again.

The leaders in the revival therefore, and their adherents, were generally strenuous opposers of the half-way covenant, and of the doctrine that the Lord's supper is a converting ordinance; and often made it a condition of their ordination over a church, that the practice upon that covenant and doctrine should be abolished. The struggle between the friends and opposers of that revival,

was long and severe. The former, however, gradually and universally triumphed, and placed the half-way covenant, and the kindred doctrine that the Lord's supper is a converting ordinance, among the things that were; and now among the orthodox Congregational churches of New England, there is not one, which does not require experience of the renewing grace of God, as the qualification for admission to its communion or any of the privileges of its members.

Great is the contrast between the churches of New England in 1742 and 1842, *as to purity*.

It is a matter of proper congratulation in this church, that it is the offspring of that great revival, and was organized in conformity with the grand idea of the new birth, as a radical and self-evincing change; that its founders eschewed the half-way covenant; and that one of its ministers (Dr. Edwards) was one of the ablest advocates in New England, of what may with propriety be called the *second Reformation*. I observe,

III. There has been a decided improvement during the last century in the *qualifications of the ministry*.

During the great revival, there was much controversy respecting *unconverted ministers*. There is now no doubt, that some of the leading revivalists acted with great impropriety, in their hasty and public condemnation of individual ministers as unconverted men. There is no doubt that they supposed that there were more unconverted ministers, than there really were. And there can be as little doubt, that there *were* unconverted men in the ministry. Such will ever be the fact where religion has, in any considerable degree, degenerated into formalism. The peculiar views and practices of the churches at that time, especially the admission of unconverted

men to the church, in order that they might partake of its ordinances as means of conversion, coupled with the idea, that conversion is such a gradual, still, and unobservable matter, that no one can judge either for himself or others, whether that point has yet been passed, greatly favored the entrance of unconverted men to the ministry. It was at that time a fact admitted by all, that there were unconverted ministers. Stoddard, in his "Appeal to the Learned," took that fact for granted, and argued from it, that *unconverted* ministers have certain official duties, which they may lawfully perform.\*

There may be unconverted men in the ministry now. But if there are, they have to enter it notwithstanding the universal opinion that an unconverted minister is not to be tolerated, and is at once to be *deposed*; notwithstanding the clearest light as to what are evidences of conversion; and notwithstanding the close application of numerous and thorough tests of conversion. I am therefore safe in saying that the number is proportionably much less than it was in 1742.

But when I speak of improvement in the *qualifications* of the ministry, I have reference principally to *intellectual* qualifications, and to the superior *educational* privileges of the present day. Then our colleges were much more imperfect than they now are. An education at Yale College now, is worth three times what it was in 1742. Then, there were not, as now, theological seminaries, where access may be had to well furnished libraries, and where are our ablest men devoting their whole time to instruction in theology; but, young men pursued their divinity studies with settled ministers, whose parochial and pulpit duties were a sufficient employment,

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\* See Tracy, 393.

without the labor of teaching. Then, a few months of theological study was deemed sufficient for entrance on the work of the ministry. Now, three years of theological study are required, added to seven years of academical study. It must be, therefore, that the ministers of the present day are far better furnished *intellectually* for their work, than were those of a century since. I observe,

IV. That there has been great improvement during the past century in the *exhibition of the system of truth contained in the Scriptures*—not in the *system of truth itself contained* in the Scriptures, but in the *exhibition* of that system, in other words, *improvement in theology as a science*. Some men are greatly startled at the idea of improvements in theology. But it is because they misapprehend the language. Theology, as it is in the *Bible*, cannot be improved. To suppose that it can be, is to suppose that God's word can be improved, which would be impious. But theology as it exists in the *understanding and comprehension of men*—theology as *known*—theology as a *science*, may be indefinitely improved. To say otherwise, would be to make the understanding of men infallible, and absurdly to declare that various conflicting theologies, or theological systems, are alike true. The possibility of improvements in theology as a science, every man virtually admits; for there is none, who will not admit that the theology of *other men*, particularly of his *opponents*, is capable of improvement, whatever he may think of his own. Such improvement has been made during the past century, and such doubtless will be, in the century to come. Ancestors are relatively the youth of the world, and posterity its old men. We are older in the world, or rather in *an older world*, than our ancestors. We stand on their shoulders, and may be expected, if

we improve our position, to see farther than they did. We commence, with the results of all their labor for capital. In like manner, posterity will be older than we; standing on our shoulders, will see farther than we; and commencing their intellectual toil with the results of ours, will acquire more intellectual wealth than we.\*

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\* The fatuity of the doctrine, that no improvements can be made in theology, not as *written in the Bible*, but as *understood and held and expounded by men*, baffles all description. No man ever advanced it without the most palpable and constant self-contradiction. Who is there, who does not hold, that there are various systems of theology, which are capable of improvement? One may think this system perfect; another that; but who is there, who will make the stupid assertion, that *all* the systems of theology, however different and contradictory, which the world has seen, are *alike* perfect and incapable of improvement? *Whose* theology is it, that cannot be improved? Is it to be found in the works of the *fathers*, by which it has been said you can "prove almost any thing?" Is it the theology of Origen, or Cyprian, or Gregory, or Jerome, or Augustine, or Chrysostom? Is it the theology of Luther, or Calvin, or the Westminster divines? Is it the theology of the Congregationalists, or Presbyterians, or Episcopalian, or Methodists, or Baptists, or Unitarians, or Universalists? All these and many others, are professedly derived from the Bible. Is there some one among the divines of *this country*, who has taught the unimprovable, the infallible theology? Who is he? Is he President Edwards senior, or President Edwards the younger? Dr. Hopkins, or Dr. Dwight? Dr. Emmons, or Dr. Mason? Or, to come down to the *present* time, whose theology in these times is perfect—the exact exhibition of the theology of the Bible? Is it that of Dr. Taylor, or Dr. Woods, or Dr. Alexander? Is it that of Bishop Doane, or that of Bishop Griswold? Is it that of Dr. Beecher, or that of Dr.'s Junkin and Wilson? *Where* is it, that the infallible theology is *taught*? Is it at Andover, or New Haven, or Princeton, or Cincinnati? *Show us the unimprovable theology.*

What the opinion of Dr. Edwards was on this point, is apparent from the title of one of his publications—"Improvements in Theology, made by President Edwards and those who have followed his course of thought."

The revival of 1740, gave a great impulse to theological investigation. It roused minds to examination and profound thought. Its grand idea, as I have said, was the doctrine of the new birth. To this central truth in the theological system it called attention. Investigation was centered, and light was poured, upon that doctrine. Ministers saw more clearly than ever, that the great ob-

I quote the following very just and pertinent remarks from Archbishop Whately. "And again if any persons claim for any traditions of the church, an authority, either paramount to Scripture, or equal to Scripture, or concurrent with it—or, which comes to the same thing, *decisive as to the interpretation of Scripture*,—taking on themselves to decide what is 'the church,' and what tradition is to be thus received,—these persons are plainly called on to establish by miraculous evidence the claims they advance.

"But to such as reject and protest against all such groundless claims, an interminable field is still open for the application of all the faculties, intellectual and moral, with which God has endowed us, for the *fuller understanding and development of the truths revealed in his written word.* \* \* \* \* \* We may advance, and we may lead others to advance, indefinitely, in the full development of gospel truth—of the real character and meaning and design of Christ's religion; not by seeking to *superadd* something to the gospel revelation; but by a more correct and fuller comprehension of it;—not by increasing, absolutely, the light of the noon-day sun, but by clearing away the mists which obscure our view of it. *Christianity itself cannot be improved; but men's views, and estimate, and comprehension of Christianity, may be indefinitely improved.*" Kingdom of Christ, p. 127.

This is as good against those in this country, who in the intellectual bondage of implicit faith in articles, confessions of faith, and catechisms, delight in their chains, and cry out against the doctrine of improvement in theology, as it is in England against the Oxford Tractators and Puseyites, who contend for implicit faith in the early fathers, and for ancient Christianity, with all its corruptions, as that from which we may not abate, or to which we may not add, one jot or tittle. The former are first cousins at least to the latter. They are like them in their belittling bondage to fallible and imperfect men.

ject of their mission was to reconcile men to God, by proclaiming to them in their deep depravity and ruin, the truth, "*Ye must be born again.*" Their preaching was shaped more and more, to suit the purpose of leading men to turn at once from sin to God. This they saw was the object and effect of the apostles' preaching. With this object, they rejected, one after another, those views which were barriers in the way of the consistent enforcement, of what the Bible every where enforces, the duty of *immediate repentance*. They soon saw, that it must be true, that what a just God commands men as moral agents to do, *they can do*; that holiness, which He commands them to exercise, must therefore be what they *can* exercise, viz. a *voluntary affection of the soul*; and that *sin*, which He commands them to refrain from, must be what they *can* refrain from, viz. a *voluntary affection of the soul*; that the *sinfulness* of mankind consists therefore, not in a corrupt nature propagated from Adam, but *wholly* and *only* in their *own voluntary opposition* to God, and the best interests of His kingdom; that the new heart which God requires sinners to make consists, not in new powers or faculties, not in a new principle distinct from and behind all voluntary affection, (which things manifestly man cannot make,) but simply in *new affections*, in a *new voluntary disposition*; that therefore sinners were to be exhorted, not to *wait* for a new heart in the use of means, such as hearing the word, prayer, and partaking of ordinances, but at once, under the influence of God's truth and Spirit, to make themselves new hearts, to repent and believe in Christ, and were to be told, that every thing short of this, or not implying this, was but the addition of iniquity to iniquity. They saw, that as this

change was one in the voluntary affections of the soul, it was a change which could be *ascertained*—which would evince itself in the consciousness and conduct of its subject. They saw moreover, that what is freely offered by God to all must be provided for all, and therefore the provision of salvation by the atonement of Christ is not limited to the elect, but unlimited—made for the whole human race. It has been seen also and held, that God's decrees, which embrace all events, must be executed, so far as the actions of free agents are concerned, in a mode which is consistent with their free agency, and therefore not by an *irresistible* influence; and as God hates and forbids sin, and loves and commands holiness, He therefore, in every case, prefers holiness to sin.

The result is, that in the course of the past century great improvements have been made in theology, as believed and preached; the most prominent of which I will briefly mention.

1. As to *the free agency of man*. Whereas it was formerly held that man has no *natural ability* to obey God, or indeed to do any thing but sin, it is now held that he is an agent complete in his freedom, competent to do or refrain from doing what God requires or forbids.

2. Whereas, formerly, *views of the nature of holiness and sin* were indefinite, and implied that there is sin in the constitution of the soul of man—in the work of the Creator: now holiness and sin are well and correctly defined, as *free voluntary affections of the soul*; holiness as the love of being in general, or a voluntary preference of God and the interests of his kingdom as the chief good; and sin as the transgression of God's law—a free choice or preference of the world and worldly good to God and the interests of His kingdom.

3. Whereas it was formerly held on the subject of *native depravity*, that there are two sorts of sin, one either committed in Adam or increased, the other voluntary and committed in life—held by some, that all Adam's posterity were living in him and voluntarily joined in his sin; by others, that his sin is *transferred* to his posterity so as to become theirs; and by others still, that a sinful and damnable nature descends to them by propagation; it is now generally held, that while all Adam's posterity sin as soon as they act morally, in *consequence of his sin*, they yet sin freely, and are and can be guilty of no sin, but their *own free voluntary selfish affections*.

4. Whereas it was formerly held, that a *new heart* consists in new faculties or powers, or in a new principle implanted by creative and irresistible agency; and by consequence, that sinners were to be exhorted, not to repent and make themselves new hearts, but in the use of means to *wait* for the gift of a new heart: now it is held that a new heart consists simply in a new, totally opposite, exercise of *powers possessed*—in a new, free, voluntary disposition, viz. the supreme love of God and His kingdom; and that sinners are to be exhorted to repent, and thus, according to the Divine direction, make themselves new hearts, *at once*, as the first and all-comprehending duty.\*

5. The views now entertained of the *nature of experimental religion* are more definite, clear, and distinguishing, enabling a person to ascertain with far more satisfaction, whether or not he is a new creature.

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\* As to the *necessity* of the influence of the Holy Spirit in order to the new heart, the divines of that and this day unite in saying, that it is absolute—without that influence this change never takes place.

6. As to the *nature and extent of the atonement*. It was formerly held that Christ's atonement was the literal payment of a debt, due from the elect. Of course it was an atonement which not only precluded pardon and grace in the sinner's deliverance, but was *limited* to a *portion of mankind*, the elect. Now, it is held, that Christ made an atonement for the *whole human race*, which is equivalent to the punishment of sinners, not in amount of suffering, or as the payment of a debt, but in sustaining the divine law and government, by manifestation of the divine displeasure at sin.

7. The *doctrine of decrees* was formerly so held and explained, as to be inconsistent with human freedom, and with the Divine justice and sincerity in forbidding and punishing and expressing His hatred of sin, in exhorting to repentance, and in offering and commanding to accept salvation: now, it is extensively so held and explained, that, while it secures the *certainty of events*, it is entirely consistent with human free agency, with God's preference of holiness to sin in all cases, and of course with the Divine justice and sincerity, in all the commands, invitations, and exhortations of His word.

The preaching of the gospel is more direct, more practical, more in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and right reason, more self-consistent, and of course more mighty for the pulling down of strong holds, than it was a hundred years since. I observe,

V. That great progress has been made during the last century, especially the latter part of it, as to *the frequency, and power, and purity of revivals of religion*.

Previous, especially for fifty years previous, to the year 1735, revivals of religion were quite infrequent. The revival of 1740, or rather from 1735 to 1742, commonly

called the Great Awakening, was very extensive and powerful—a glorious work of the Spirit of God. But it was followed, as in this historical survey has been seen, by a long and lamentable religious declension—a declension owing to the great opposition made to the revival, to the great extravagance of action and opinion which accompanied it, and to the peculiar political state of the country.

For nearly sixty years, revivals were almost unknown in Connecticut, and not only unknown, but feared and shunned. About the year 1798, they commenced again in Litchfield and Hartford counties;\* were frequent and powerful, and have been growing more frequent and powerful ever since. In this place, there was a revival in the College in 1802. But in these churches, as we have seen, there was no revival from 1742 to 1805, a space of more than sixty years. From that time, there have been, in the space of thirty-seven years, ten revivals of religion! Within the last thirty-seven years, there have been more revivals of religion, and more hopeful conversions in New Haven, than between that time and the first settlement of the place, during a space of one hundred and sixty-six

\* I have often heard my honored father say that he well recollects the fear and distrust with which the best ministers at this time looked upon the recurrence of revivals, on account of the confusion and extravagance into which the revival of 1740 degenerated, and the great and sad decline of vital piety which followed it. He was then preparing for college with Dr. Backus of Bethlem. He says that when the revivals commenced in the northern part of Litchfield county, in 1798, it was hard for Dr. Backus to believe that there was any good in them. At length, by invitation of a pastor in whose church there was a revival, he went to see and judge for himself. He went full of fear and distrust, and almost hopeless of any thing good. He came back with his heart melted and overjoyed at the blessed and unexceptionable results of the manifest working of the Holy Spirit.

years! The same remark, I presume, is substantially true of the rest of the state and New England. Such progress has there been as to the *frequency* and *power* of revivals of religion.

Progress has been made, also, in respect to their *purity*. There is less confusion and extravagance in action. There are, proportionably, fewer spurious conversions. This is what we should expect, from what I have already said. The *churches* have improved in purity and piety, and of course in preparation for revivals of religion; the *ministry* have been better educated; the word of God has been better understood and preached; the nature of experimental religion, and the differences between genuine and false religious experience, have been more generally and clearly apprehended; and the methods of God's Spirit, in leading men to repentance, more extensively observed and regarded.

As to extravagance and confusion in action and measures, what, among all the extravagant things that have taken place in the Congregational and Presbyterian churches, of late years, will compare with the recorded extravagances of Davenport, Barber, Tennent, Whitefield, and even Jonathan Edwards? The course of no Congregational or Presbyterian revivalist, approaches in extravagance and confusion, that even of Edwards, and the more judicious revivalists of those days, as to outcries and bodily agitations.

And as to *spurious conversions*, hear what Edwards, the great champion of that revival, admits: "There are, undoubtedly," says he, "very many instances in *New England*, in the whole, of the perseverance of such as were thought to have received the saving benefits of the late revival of religion, and of their continuing to walk in new-

ness of life, as becomes saints—instances which are incontestible, and which men must be most obstinately blind not to see ; but I believe the proportion here is not so great as in Scotland. I cannot say that the *greater part* of the supposed converts give reason, by their conversation, to suppose that they are *true* converts. The proportion may, perhaps, be more truly represented by the proportion of the blossoms on a tree which abide and come to mature fruit, to the whole number of blossoms in the spring.” This he says in 1751, ten years after the revival, in a letter to a gentleman in Scotland, in which he remarks, that “it is fit that the very truth of the case should be known, and that things should be represented neither better nor worse than they are.”

Who among us, will not say, that the proportion of real to supposed conversions, in the revivals which have taken place within his knowledge, is not much greater than this? I observe,

VI. That progress has been made, as to the employment of those *measures which are fitted to keep alive the spirit of piety in a church, and to promote revivals of religion.* I refer, especially, to meetings during the week, for prayer and mutual exhortation, and for listening to a familiar exhibition of divine truth. Ninety, and even fifty years since, such meetings were almost unknown. Two services on the Sabbath, and a sacramental lecture once in a month or two, were generally the sum of religious services. There are many who hear me, who can recollect the time when evening meetings, and especially evening prayer-meetings, (“*night meetings,*” as they were called,) were deemed irregular and disreputable, and of course were violently opposed. When Mr. Merwin was ordained over this church, in 1805, the only social meeting of a religious

nature, during the week, in this place, was composed of a few pious women, who assembled to converse on religious subjects and sing hymns; for them to *pray* together, was deemed, even by themselves, quite beyond the bounds of propriety. Now, a church which does not maintain each week a conference and lecture, to say nothing of more limited meetings for prayer, would be deemed to live quite below its duties and privileges. I observe,

VII. There has been progress during the last century, in *purity of morals*. The first Puritan founders of these New England colonies, being a select number of eminently religious men, maintained, doubtless, a higher tone of morals than is now maintained. But from generation to generation it declined, till 1740. From that time to the present, at least from 1780, soon after the close of the Revolutionary war, to the present time, it has been gradually, though not uniformly, rising. Upon the proof of this assertion I have not time to enter. I refer you to the common sources of statistical information, confident that you will come to the same conclusion. They who consult our civil and ecclesiastical records,\* can have no doubt on this subject. To allude to only one point in morals, and yet one connected with almost all others, what wondrous progress has been made in *temperance*, during the last twenty years!

I will mention but one item more, of moral progress during the last century. There has been,

VIII. Very great progress in *benevolent action* for the amelioration of the temporal condition, and for the evan-

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\* The evidence, for instance, therein furnished, of the frequent, not to say customary violation of the seventh commandment, among all classes of people, is most surprising to modern readers. On this point, see Pres. Edwards' sermon on Genesis, xxxix, 12.

gelization of the human race. Within a few years the principle of voluntary association, in the hands of Christians, has been developed with wondrous power and with wide-spread and blessed results. Oh! what has associated Christian benevolence done within the last fifty years for human weal! It has given ears to the deaf, and language to the dumb, and eyes to the blind. It has spoken words of relief and truth to the prisoner, given health to the sick, and almost parental care and kindness to the orphan. It has multiplied Bibles and religious leaves and volumes by millions, and scattered them broad-cast over the world. It has sent messengers to guilty, lost man, at home, on the sea, and on heathen shores, with the joyful proclamation of eternal salvation by the name of Jesus. It has indeed ever been the office of Christianity, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and relieve the varied forms of human woe; but within the last half century she has fulfilled this benign office with combined and multiplied zeal and power. Christianity has indeed ever had, in a greater or less degree, the spirit of missions; for the spirit of missions is an essential part of her own spirit. That spirit, however, during the latter part of the eighteenth century, slumbered. But about the beginning of the nineteenth century it awoke, and since that time, especially of late, it has had a *rapidly* progressive development. Sixty years since, there were in New England no associations, and few individuals, engaged in missionary labor. Since then, from time to time, Societies, strong in the strength of united Christian hearts and energies, have been springing up—the Bible Society, the various Foreign Missionary Societies, the Home Missionary Societies, the Tract Society, the Seamen's Friend Society, (not to mention several minor

associations,) all bearing on their front the divine command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And under their united energies, oh! how does the work glow, and the light extend! Sixty years since, and prayers for the conversion of the world were isolated and disheartened petitions, here and there from the closet, the family altar, and the pulpit. Since that time, the *monthly concert of prayer* for the salvation of the world has been established in various denominations; and now each month, (as well as daily, hopefully and earnestly from closets and altars,) from thousands of churches, and from tens of thousands of hearts, mingle in their ascent to the throne of God, the petitions, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven." Sixty years since, and very little was given for the spread of the gospel. Now, the rich man of his abundance, and the poor man of his penury, and the child of his little store, cast in to the treasury of the Lord. Within the last fifty years, *contributions for missions have increased five hundred fold.* And what is more encouraging, the church, as God blesses her efforts and the work grows on her vision, is feeling more and more, that her past labors have been altogether *inadequate*; and as the tidings reach her ear of here and there a mission established, here and there a soul and here and there a community made gloriously free by the truth and Spirit of the Lord; as her eye beholds the millennial dawn streaking the eastern sky, she raises her cry from crowded city, and hill, and vale, and plain, "So much the *more* as ye see the day approaching." Oh! if the prayers and contributions of the church for the world's conversion, increase in the same proportion for fifty years to come, as they have in fifty years that are

past, the gospel will be preached to every creature, and the prophecy of my text fulfilled, "And it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

I will detain you with two or three remarks in conclusion; and

First, In view of the history of this church, and especially in view of the moral and religious progress which has been the theme of discourse this evening, I would remark—that we have peculiar reason for gratitude to God.

It was the refreshing from His presence a century since, which gave origin and character to this church, and woke the churches of New England from stupidity and formalism, and saved them from apostacy. It was He who watched over this church in the days of her weakness and trial. It was He who gave her deliverance, and to all his churches progressive, and at length complete, liberty. It was He who gave her numbers and strength. It is He who, here, from time to time, has renewed and adopted as his sons and daughters a great multitude, and hence has removed them to meet the Lord in paradise. It was He who purified the churches. It is He who has given them a more evangelical and better educated ministry. It is He who has vouchsafed to his ministers and people, a more clear, correct, and consistent understanding of his holy word. It is He who has made revivals of religion more frequent, pure, and

powerful, and multiplied converts as the drops of the morning. It is He who has roused and combined the energies of the church for the salvation of the earth, and united with them the far mightier energies of His Holy Spirit. It is He who has handed down to us the privileges, multiplied and improved, which we enjoy to-day. Thanks to His grace. "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! who shall not fear thee and glorify thy name." I remark,

Again, We have reason for *confidence in God, that it will be well for Zion, and for man in the future.* This we know from Jehovah's promises. We may also argue it from our survey of the past century. He has been our God in years that are past. He shall be our hope for years to come. He made and fulfilled a covenant with our fathers. He will not forget the children. What He has done within the few last generations, indicates that He has great things in store for the future. Widely has He sown the seed. Glorious will be the harvest. A noble foundation has He laid. He will not fail to rear the superstructure in grandeur and beauty, till the top-stone is laid amid universal hosannas and shoutings of "grace, grace unto it." I know, that there are many dark features in the present age, and he who looks *exclusively at them* may despond. But, oh! how much brighter are its features than those of the ages that are gone! He who looks at the present, and *compares it with the past*, surely cannot despond. There has been, there is now, great moral progress. This more than any other since the sun began his race, is an *age* of progress. The wheels of the chariot of God's providence and grace, move onward and not backward. Be not despondent then in view of rapid changes, as though the

foundations were to be destroyed. Be not dismayed at these rapidly succeeding revolutions—these dire convulsions—this crash of kingdoms. In all *this*, there is progress. Jehovah is shaking the nations, that the desire of all nations may come. What though wickedness and error widely prevail in the earth; what though there be distress of the nations with perplexity; what though the sea and waves are roaring, and men's hearts are failing them for fear of those things that are coming on the earth. Look at the Redeemer's *growing kingdom*. *He* is overturning and overturning and overturning, that that *kingdom* may fill the whole earth. Now is the time to lift our heads and sing, for the world's redemption draweth nigh. Know, that in the mediatorial kingdom of Christ on earth, the *law is progress*. When evil threatens, He will bring good out of evil. When confusion prevails, He will bring order out of confusion. When darkness lowers, He will put light for darkness. When light shines, look for more glorious things, for He will brighten even the day.

Once more, How great the *privilege* and the *responsibility of living in this age and in this community!* How abundant and how eminent are our means of grace! How is salvation in a thousand modes brought to our very doors! How great are our means of usefulness! Oh! in this day, when the facilities for making the gospel felt at home, and for sending the gospel through the world, are so multiplied, and when God has taught us that by association the rills of benevolence may be combined into one broad stream, yea, into a mighty ocean which shall flow from pole to pole, how much, my brethren in the ministry, how much my brethren in the church, may *we do for God!* How surely shall we receive the appellation

and condemnation of the wicked and slothful servant, if we fail to do it! And oh! my impenitent friends, what will it be, from amid these free-flowing waters of salvation to go unprepared to the bar of God! What will it be, from these favored places to go down to eternal death!

A century has passed away, since this church was organized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and assembled—a feeble band—around the table of the Lord. Here, since that time, has been proclaimed the true gospel. Here, to-day, God is worshipped through Jesus Christ. Still bright, to-day, is the fire kindled a hundred years since upon this altar; and around this table of the Lord is now gathered a great company. Thanks be to God.

Another century will come. Then, oh! then, and when another shall come, and another, and another, till time shall be no longer, may this same gospel be here proclaimed in its purity; on this altar may burn bright and brighter this fire of Christian love; and round this table of the Lord, may there be gathered from age to age thousands and thousands more to partake of the bread and the wine in sweet remembrance of Jesus.

A century has passed away, since with voices of praise and prayer, this Christian church was set apart for the worship of God. Where now are those voices? Gone. No, not gone. Still they linger, calling *us* to praise and prayer. But *they*, whose were those voices—where are they? All gone, and of their *children* but here and there a solitary one remains.

Another century will come. Then where shall we be, who now throng this house? In what congregation? Ah! in what quick succession does generation after generation pass to the tribunal of God! Within the four years

that I have been permitted to minister to you in holy things, how many of this beloved people, have I been called to commit to the tomb! How soon shall we all follow! Who follows next? *Who?* My dying fellow men! my immortal fellow men! are you ready? ready by repentance for sin—ready by faith in Christ?

## A P P E N D I X.

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### THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH PROFESSED IN THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NEW HAVEN, AND PROFESSED, ANEW, BY THE FIRST MEMBERS OF THE WHITE HAVEN CHURCH.

CONCERNING God, I believe he is incomprehensible, and that none by searching can find out the Almighty to perfection. But in the book of creation—in the works of his hands, which we every where behold, may clearly be read the existence and perfection of a glorious Creator. But in his word, (which he has magnified above all his name,) which I believe was given by Divine inspiration, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, he hath more fully revealed himself to be a Spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, goodness, and truth. In the Unity of the glorious Godhead there is a Trinity of persons, distinguished in the manner of their subsisting and by their relative properties, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Concerning the decrees of God, I believe they are his eternal purposes, according to the council of his own will, whereby for his own glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, and that God executeth his decrees in the works of Creation and Providence. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing by the word of his power, and in space of six days, and all very good. The works of God's providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions.

I believe God made man, at the first, male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over his creatures; and that man being placed in so holy and happy an estate, and advanced in honor above the rest of the lower creation, soon apostatized, and made defection from his glorious and bountiful Creator. The particular prohibition it

pleased God to lay man under for the trial of his obedience, was that he should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death ; which, he being left to the freedom of his own will, did most voluntarily offend against, by which act of disobedience, he, standing as the public head and representative for all his progeny, we all became sinners. Through that offence judgment is now come upon all to condemnation ; whereby we have not only lost the image of God and a general corruption overspread our natures, but we expose ourselves to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and the pains of hell forever.

And that God did not deal with the race of sinful Adam upon their fall as with that number of angels which kept not their first station, who for their rebellion were righteously expelled the glorious mansions of heaven, cast down to hell and reserved under chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day, was a fruit and effect of his mere good pleasure. He, having from all eternity elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of an estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer. The only Redeemer of God's elect, I believe, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person, became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, born of her, and yet without sin. This hypostatical union of the Divine and human natures in the person of our glorious Mediator, and that he continues to be God and man, (I believe,) and that in two distinct natures and one person forever ; and that as our Redeemer he executeth the threefold office of a prophet, priest, and king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation. I believe, as he was delivered for our offences, so he rose again for our justification, that he was dead and is alive, and lives forever, ascended up into heaven, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto him. I believe, that when our blessed Redeemer, being about to leave the world and ascend unto the Father, did, for the consolation of his disciples, promise, that when he should

depart he would send the Comforter, which should reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and judgment—that Spirit of truth, which should lead them into all truth. So I believe the same Holy Spirit, is, and will be even to the end of the world, sent forth into the hearts of all God's elect, to work in their hearts every saving qualification. I believe the necessity of a change in the nature of all such as are made heirs of eternal life: they must be born again; as ever they would see the kingdom of God, they must be made partakers of a new and divine nature, their understanding illuminated, their wills persuaded, and their souls purified, and that by the mighty operation of the Spirit. As in their effectual calling I believe that they that have received true grace in their hearts, as a grain of mustard seed, shall never finally perish: where Christ hath shed his love in any soul, he will love even unto the end. Concerning believers at their death, they are perfect in happiness, their souls being united to Christ, their bodies sweetly rest in their graves till the resurrection. Justification is, I believe, an act of God's free grace, whereby he pardons all our sins and accepts of us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone. Adoption is also an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have right to all the privileges, of the sons of God. Sanctification is a work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the spirit of our minds after the image of God, and we are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.

Concerning faith, I believe it is a saving grace, whereby a sinner receives and rests alone upon Jesus Christ for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel. Concerning repentance, evangelical repentance is a saving grace, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sins and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sins turn from it with purpose of and endeavor after new obedience. Concerning the church, I believe it to be a congregation of saints, joined together in the bond of the covenant to worship the Lord and edify one another in all his holy ordinances. A church of Christ hath power to choose their own officers, to receive in their own members, to

administer discipline upon all offenders according to the rule of Christ either by admonition or excommunication. Concerning baptism, baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein by washing with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our engrafting into Christ and being made partakers of his benefits and our engagement to be the Lord's. The Lord's supper is also a sacrament of the New Testament; wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ's appointment his death is shewed forth, and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, together with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. Concerning the resurrection, I believe the resurrection of the just and of the unjust, of small and great, in order to a final judgment. At the sound of the trumpet, all that are in their graves shall arise and appear before the great tribunal, and that then Christ, the righteous Judge, will render to every one according to their deeds done in the body, whether good or evil. The righteous shall be first judged, whom Christ will openly acknowledge and acquit, to whom he will then say, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world; but unto the wicked he will pronounce that tremendous and heavy doom, Go, ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

#### CHURCH COVENANT.

God having inclined the hearts of the brethren to receive you into the fellowship of this Church covenant, which is this—That through Christ strengthening you, without whom you can do nothing, you, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts and pollutions, wherein at any time you have walked; and that you do give up yourself unto the Lord Jesus Christ, to be taught and governed by him in all your relations, conditions, and conversations, in this world, avouching him to be your only Prophet and Teacher; your only Priest and Propitiation; your only King and Lawgiver; and do further bind yourself, in his strength to walk with this Church in all the ordinances of Christ; and with the members thereof in memberlike submission according to Christ.

In the year 1776, in the early part of Dr. Edwards' ministry, this confession of faith, being considered prolix, and in some places obscurely expressed, was laid aside for the following.

"I believe that there is one only living and true God, a spirit infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; and that in the unity of the Godhead there is a trinity of persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

"I believe that the Scriptures are the word of God, given by divine inspiration, and are a perfect rule of life and manners, and teach the only way of eternal salvation.

"I believe that God by his decrees hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; and that God in the execution of his decrees made all things out of nothing in six days; and by his providence preserves and governs all his creatures and all their actions.

"I believe that God made man, at first, after his own image, but that man soon apostatized from God by eating the forbidden fruit: by which act, Adam standing as the public head and representative of all his progeny, we are all become sinners, have lost the image of God, and a universal and total corruption hath overspread our natures, whereby we are exposed to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and the pains of hell forever.

"I believe that God, having elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to save them by a Redeemer; that this Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who became man and continues to be both God and man in two different natures and one person forever; that he as our Redeemer executeth the threefold office of a prophet, priest, and king; and that he was dead and is alive and lives forever, made head over all things to the church.

"I believe that the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, is and will be to the end of the world, sent forth into the hearts of all God's elect, to teach, sanctify, and comfort them.

"I believe the necessity of a change of nature in all such as shall be made heirs of eternal life; their understandings must be enlightened, their hearts must be reconciled to God, and their

souls purified by the operation of the divine Spirit ; and that on whomsoever the grace of God is thus bestowed in the smallest degree, they shall never finally perish.

"I believe that faith is a saving grace, whereby a sinner receives and rests upon Christ alone for salvation ; that evangelical repentance is a saving grace, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sins and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of sin turn from it unto God, with purpose of and endeavors after new obedience ; that all believers are by an act of God's free grace justified only on account of the righteousness of Christ received by faith ; that they are graciously adopted into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God ; that in sanctification they are renewed in the spirit of their minds after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness.

"I believe a church to be a congregation of saints joined together in the bond of the covenant to worship the Lord and to edify one another in all his holy ordinances. A church of Christ hath power to choose its own officers, to receive its own members, and to administer discipline upon all offenders according to the rules of Christ, either by admonition or excommunication.

"I believe the sacraments of the New Testament to be these two, baptism and the Lord's supper ; that baptism signifies and seals our engraving with Christ, being made partakers of his benefits, and our engagements to be the Lord's ; and that in the Lord's supper the death of Christ is showed forth, and that the worthy receivers of the bread and wine are spiritually by faith made partakers of his body and blood, together with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

"I believe that the souls of believers, at their death, are made perfect in holiness, and immediately pass into glory ; but their bodies rest in their graves until the resurrection.

"I believe the resurrection of the just and of the unjust, of small and great, in order to a final judgment, when the righteous shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted, and the wicked shall be sent away into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

In 1788, toward the latter part of Dr. Edwards' ministry, the foregoing confession of faith was altered as follows :—

1. I believe there is one only living and true God, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, and that this God exists in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in essence and equal in glory.
2. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are a revelation from God, and a perfect rule to direct how we may glorify and enjoy him.
3. That God hath foreordained and worketh all things according to his eternal purpose and the counsel of his own will.
4. That he created all things, and preserves and governs all creatures and all their actions in a manner consistent with man's free agency, and the use of means, so that the sinfulness of actions is imputable only to creatures and not to God, who is holy in all his works.
5. That man was at first created holy, in the image of God.
6. That the first man sinned, and he being the public head of his posterity, they all became sinners in consequence of his first transgression, and are while unregenerate wholly indisposed to that which is spiritually good, and inclined to evil ; from whence proceed actual transgressions ; and on account of sin are justly liable to all the miseries of this life, to death and the pains of hell forever.
7. That God, of his mere good pleasure, elected some of mankind to everlasting life, and gave his only begotten Son to assume human nature and die for sinners, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life, and thereby hath laid a foundation for the offer of pardon and salvation to all mankind in the gospel ; and does by his special grace and Holy Spirit regenerate, sanctify, and enable to persevere in holiness, all who shall be saved.
8. That Jesus Christ, who is God and man in one divine person, rose from the dead the third day, and ever lives to make intercession for his people, and governs all things for their good, and by the virtue of his atonement as the only meritorious cause

procures their justification, adoption and final salvation, in consequence of their repentance and faith in himself.

9. I believe that a church is a congregation of Christians professing faith in Christ and obedience to him, and joined in covenant for ordinary communion in all his ordinances ; and that those who are sincere in their profession are real saints. That a church hath power to choose its own officers, to admit members, and exercise government and discipline according to the rules of the gospel.

10. I believe that the sacraments of the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are holy ordinances instituted by Christ ; that baptism is a sign and seal of the believer's faith and union with Christ, and acceptance and participation of his benefits ; and of the obligation of the subjects to be the Lord's ; and that the infants of members of the church are to be baptized ; that in the Lord's Supper, Christ's death is shewed forth and commemorated, and the worthy receivers are by faith made partakers of all his benefits to their growth in grace.

11. I believe that the souls of believers are at their death made perfectly holy and immediately taken to glory.

12. That at the end of this world there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a final judgment of all mankind, when the righteous will be publicly acquitted by Christ the Judge, and admitted to everlasting life and glory, and the wicked will be condemned and go away into everlasting punishment.

In 1796, when the Fair Haven and White Haven churches were united, the confession of faith and covenant were again abridged and altered as follows :

#### PROFESSION OF FAITH.

You believe that there is one only living and true God, existing in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost —the same in essence and equal in glory : That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are given by the inspiration of God, and are a perfect rule of faith and practice : That all mankind, by nature, are in a lost and ruined state, and, as sinners, stand justly condemned by the law of God, to suffer his wrath

and curse : That the atonement and righteousness of Jesus Christ is the only foundation of hope of life eternal : That the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit are absolutely necessary to lead us to a saving knowledge of the truth ; to make us holy, and fit us for the enjoyment of God : That Jesus Christ, who is God and man in one person, arose from the dead on the third day, and ever lives to make intercession for his people.

You believe that the souls of believers are at their death made perfectly holy, and admitted to the enjoyment of God in his heavenly kingdom : That at the end of the world there will be a resurrection of the dead, and final judgment of all mankind, when the righteous shall be publicly acquitted by CHRIST the Judge, and admitted to everlasting life and glory, and the wicked condemned to everlasting punishment.

#### COVENANT.

And you do this day publicly acknowledge and choose the only living and true God to be your God ; and by the assistance of Divine grace resolve to make his Law the rule of your life, hoping that you do sincerely repent of your sins, and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your only Savior and Redeemer—trusting in the mercy of God, through his atonement as the only ground of your justification. You also hope you have a cordial love of benevolence for all mankind, sincerely desiring their best good and happiness, and a delight and complacency in those who appear to be real Christians : And through Christ strengthening you, without whom you can do nothing, you resolve to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and give up yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, to be taught and governed by him : And also bind yourself in his strength, to walk with this church in all the ordinances of Christ, and with the members thereof as becometh a member according to the requirements of the gospel. *Thus you profess and covenant.*

Then doth this church also promise you, that through the help of Christ, without whom we can do nothing, we will walk towards you in all brotherly helpfulness according to the gospel.

Thus you are admitted a member of this church, and have a right to all the privileges of it. May you have grace to improve them to the glory of God and your own edification.

The following is the half-way confession and covenant adopted in 1760.

" You do acknowledge the being of one God, in three persons, equal in, and of the same essence, possessed of all divine perfections, the glorious Creator of all things. That he powerfully preserves and governs all his creatures, and overrules all their actions for his own glory. You do acknowledge he made men, originally, perfectly agreeable to his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. That Adam stood in the place and acted in the capacity of a public covenant head and representative of all his progeny.

" That he by breaking covenant with God involved himself and his posterity in a state of guilt, corruption, and misery, justly deserving the wrath and curse of God both in this life and that which is to come. That God out of his rich and boundless mercy chose a number of the fallen race of man to everlasting life, and did enter into a covenant with his dear Son to redeem and save them. You acknowledge that there is salvation in none but Christ; that the only meritorious cause of the justification of fallen man is the righteousness of Christ, which must be imputed to us and received by faith alone for that end. You do acknowledge the absolute necessity of the regeneration and sanctification of all who shall inherit eternal life; and that it is the special work of the Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify men. You do acknowledge the immortality of the soul, the general resurrection of the body, and final judgment, and everlasting rewards and punishments. You do acknowledge that God has appointed means to obtain the blessings of eternal life, and that it is your duty and interest to seek after God in all the duties of his appointment for that end, so far as they are or may be made known to you. And particularly you do covenant and promise that in all your conversations, concerns, and dealings with your fellow men, you will have a strict regard to the rules of honesty,

justice, and uprightness; that with your fellow men you will shun evil company; that you will avoid intemperance of every kind, and every lust; that you will live peaceably, avoiding all needless contentions; that you will endeavor to perform the duties of every relation; that you will endeavor to promote the worship of God in your family, such as the daily reading some portion of God's holy word contained in what is commonly called the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, given by divine inspiration, and the only unerring rule of faith and manners, praying with and for your family; that you will endeavor to maintain strict family government, and do your endeavor in the method of a religious education of your family, that they and you may be the Lord's. You do also subject yourself to the watch, care, government, and discipline of this church. This you do acknowledge, covenant, and promise."

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The number of those who have joined the church, as far as can be ascertained, is as follows:

Those organized into the White Haven church,	. . . . .	43
Received previous to the installation of Mr. Bird,	. . . . .	78
Received during Mr. Bird's ministry,	. . . . .	82
Received during the interval between the dismission of Mr.		
Bird and the ordination of Mr. Edwards,	. . . . .	5
Received during Mr. Edwards' ministry,	. . . . .	96
The number received into the Fair Haven church, including		
its founders,	. . . . .	130
From the union to the installation of Mr. Gemmil,	. . . . .	31
During Mr. Gemmil's ministry,	. . . . .	33
From Mr. Gemmil's dismission to the ordination of Mr. Merwin,	14	
During Mr. Merwin's ministry,	. . . . .	932
From Mr. Merwin's dismission to the installation of Mr.		
Sawyer,	. . . . .	27
During Mr. Sawyer's ministry,	. . . . .	116
During the ministry of the present pastor, up to Jan. 1, 1842,	213	
Total,		1812

Some addition should doubtless be made for omissions in the record, which evidently are quite numerous.

## D E A C O N S.

On account of the imperfection of the records, a full list of the deacons of the White Haven and Fair Haven churches cannot be given. So far as they can be ascertained, their names are as follows :—

*White Haven Church.*

**ISAAC DICKERMAN.** He was a deacon in the ancient church, and joining the White Haven church April 2d, 1754, he was desired by that church to exercise his office among them. **JOSEPH RUGGLES**, chosen April 10th, 1754. **DAVID AUSTIN**, chosen Dec. 19, 1758. **DANIEL LYMAN**, chosen Feb. 20th, 1758. **SAMUEL BISHOP**, chosen Dec. 9th, 1760.

*Fair Haven Church.*

**ABRAHAM AUGUR**, chosen probably soon after the formation of the church in 1771. **JAMES GILBERT**, chosen at some time between 1771 and 1785. **LEVI IVES**, chosen June 27th, 1787.

David Austin, Samuel Bishop, Abraham Augur, James Gilbert, and Levi Ives, were living at the time of the union in 1796, and were received as deacons by the church of the United Societies of White Haven and Fair Haven.

*The Church of the United Society.*

**ABEL BURRITT**, chosen at some time between 1798 and 1804. **NATHAN BEERS**, chosen February, 1804. **WILLIAM AUSTIN** and **CHARLES BOSTWICK**, chosen October, 1814. **WILLIAM S. JARMAN** and **EDWARD PORTER**, chosen November, 1826. **SHERMAN BLAIR**, **AMASA PORTER**, **NATHANIEL JOCELYN** and **ISAAC THOMPSON**, chosen December, 1834. **JOHN MERRIMAN** and **A. HOLMES MALTBY**, chosen February, 1842.

*Note.*—There is an error on page 77, which was not observed till too late for correction. It occurs in this sentence—"For three years the church was without a pastor—till November 9th, 1787, when Mr. Samuel Austin was ordained its minister." It should read thus—"For two years the church was without a pastor—till November 9th, 1786." In most of the copies the error has been in part corrected. I was led into the error by the note on the first page of our church catalogue, and by Mr. Austin's own record. He records his ordination as occurring Nov. 9th, 1787. But Dr. Stiles in his Journal gives an account of the ordination, in which he took a part, giving the charge to the pastor, under this date, Nov. 9th, 1786. Dr. Stiles is undoubtedly right. For he was a very accurate man in such matters, and kept a record of every day in the year; while Mr. Austin kept his church record very loosely. Whenever a new catalogue is printed, this error should be corrected.

